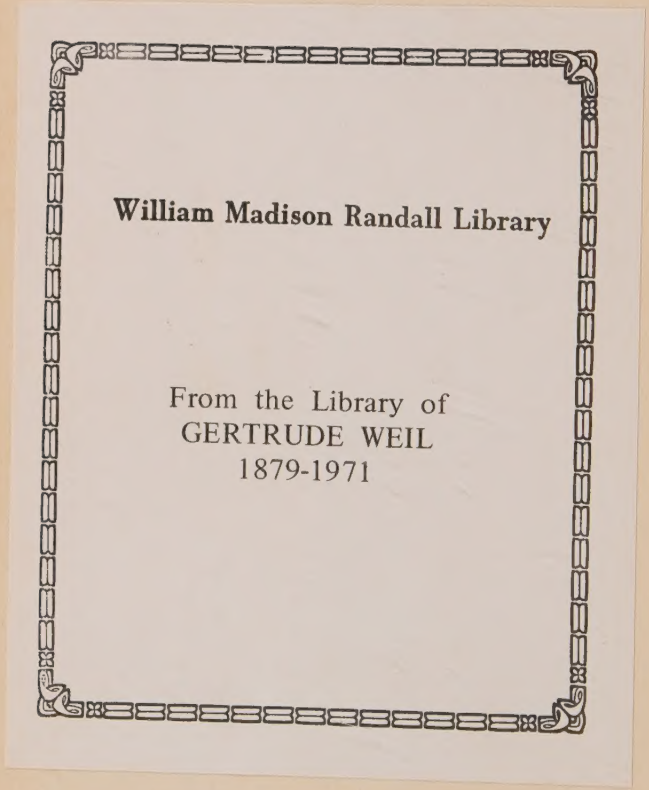

L&M

Elizabeth Rosenthal



MODERN LYRICS
AMERICAN AND BRITISH

MODERN LYRICS

AMERICAN AND BRITISH

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE

AN ANTHOLOGY

COMPILED BY
STANTON A. COBLENTZ



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PREFACE

In view of the present prevalence of anthologies, and in particular of anthologies of contemporary poetry, the compiler of a new collection of lyrics enters the field necessarily upon the defensive. "Why another anthology?" is the question with which he is certain to be assailed; and unless he can answer this challenge satisfactorily, unless he can show that his particular volume occupies some niche not filled by any other volume in existence, then explanation must inevitably give way to apologies, and he must crave pardon for having added a few more waste pages to the limbo of the unnecessary.

But it is not with an apology, nor even with a timid gesture of hesitation, that I venture to make public the accompanying selection of lyrics. Singularly enough, there seems to me to be not only a vacant place but a cavernous gap in the ranks of current poetic compilations; and, paradoxically, it is the very abundance of anthologies that makes an addition to the list not only desirable but necessary. Commendable as has been the work of recent anthologists, many compilers appear not to have been sufficiently discriminating in sorting the chaff

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from the wheat, the sand from the sugar, the thorns from the roses; they have allowed themselves to drift aimlessly with the uncertain poetic currents of the times, and have been so anxious to be liberal in their views and catholic in their preferences that they have momentarily lost sight of those fundamentals to which all true poetry must be anchored to-day no less certainly than in the times of Chaucer.

It is of course a truism that an anthology should contain good poetry; yet the reader whose ear has been attuned to graceful rhythms and whose mind has been made ready for exalted thoughts will find little satisfaction in much modern verse that is recommended as good. Page after page, he will discover, is devoted to formless effusions whose music is less than the music of dignified prose; page after page is filled with the sordid things of everyday, with kitchen sinks and bathtubs and cobblestones and loveless adulteries; and if in the interlude—as frequently occurs—one comes across a glowing sentiment or memorable melody or flash of imagination that reveals wide vistas of the sun-tinged storm-clouds or of the starry night-skies, then one is likely to be plunged on the next page into the monologue of a real estate agent if not into an epic of the hog-pens.

The whole question, of course, is fundamentally one of theory; but theory or no theory, I seriously object to turning from a finished lyric by George Sterling or Hermann Hagedorn to the raucous crudity of Alfred Kreymborg or of Carl Sandburg;

and I protest against finding a delicate love poem by Lizette Woodworth Reese sandwiched in between John V. A. Weaver's ungrammatical discourse on a Registered Pharmacist and one of Edgar Lee Masters' pseudo-Freudian disquisitions on sex. Both Mr. Masters' effort and Mr. Weaver's may be entirely appropriate in its place; but that place, in my opinion, is not in a book that purports to represent the best in contemporary poetry. While I can see no objection to a volume made up homogeneously of the work of the Imagists and Ultra-Modernists, yet I feel that it is inartistic as well as harmful and misleading to place the flippant irregularity of Marianne Moore or of William Carlos Williams side by side with the classic serenity of David Morton or the restraint and dignified charm of Thomas S. Jones. What is needed is not an anthology representative of all schools that claim to be writing poetry; what is needed is a volume based upon a clear-cut and definite conception of poetry and consistent in its attempt not to mix oil and water or to reconcile fire with ice. In my selection of lyrics I have been encouraged by the belief that such an anthology would not only fill an unoccupied place but would respond to a widely felt demand; I have been aided by the conviction that many superior poems have been overclouded if not altogether obscured by their unnatural association with the tawdry, the prosaic, and the ludicrous; and I have been actuated throughout by the view that, by the sheer excellence of its contents, a representative volume of verse in the older

forms may constitute a forceful refutation of the poetic extremists.

This, of course, brings us to the question of what comprises good poetry; and, without attempting any protracted theoretical discussion, I may state that a good poem, in my conception, should first of all be musical in essence. For if there be anything fundamental to distinguish prose from poetry, it is the elevated, orderly, and sustained rhythm of the latter, a rhythm that serves the purpose not only of beauty but of effectiveness in imparting emotions and ideas, since in some not wholly explained fashion it seems to correspond with the rhythm of the subconscious. Secondly, in order to justify its designation as a special form of literature, poetry should deal only with subjects that cannot be treated equally well in prose; it should not be concerned with stone pavements and tenements, nor even with skylarks or the sunset, unless it can attain a distinctiveness of presentation impossible without the peculiar contrivances of verse. A high percentage of the best known modern poetry and so-called poetry, it appears to me, violates both these conditions; its tonal basis as often as not is the siren or the triphammer rather than the flute or the violin, and its subjects are those that any newspaper reporter might handle almost as well.

On the other hand, there is a considerable amount of excellent poetry that has virtually escaped attention. Part of it, doubtless, has been neglected because its creators happened to be poor and without influence or good luck; part of it, assuredly,

has been overlooked because of the tendency of our intelligentsia to embrace radicalism in poetry because they favor radicalism in politics and to discard conventions in verse because they reject conventions in social life or in morality. It is largely this poetry, competent in workmanship and distinguished in subject-matter, that I have endeavored to represent in "Modern American Lyrics"; and it is my hope that I may succeed in calling attention to meritorious work that has not yet received its due meed of praise.

The reader will, of course, come across many names that are familiar and have in no wise been neglected by the critics or the public; he will discover that Edwin Arlington Robinson, Sara Teasdale, Witter Bynner, John G. Neihardt and others as widely known are represented by one or more poems each; but he will also be likely to make some new acquaintances among those who have not yet stood conspicuously in the light of publicity. In general, I have sought to confine myself to a moderate representation of the acknowledged leaders, whose work has been sufficiently heralded elsewhere; and where, as with Hermann Hagedorn and Arthur Davison Ficke, I have made as many as five or six quotations from authors frequently quoted before, I have been actuated by the conviction that the poet has received less recognition than his achievements merit.

With but one or two exceptions, the anthology is composed of the works of contemporary Americans who (so far as I know) are still alive. Alan Seeger

and Joyce Kilmer, two notable poets that for all practical purposes are our contemporaries, have been omitted not only because they are no longer living but because their best poems have already been quoted almost to excess; Bliss Carman, C. G. D. Roberts and others have been disregarded because Canadian poets do not fall within the scope of my undertaking; and William Vaughn Moody, Richard Hovey and Madison Cawein have been excluded because they belong virtually to another generation. From among the poets represented, moreover, I have aimed to choose largely the pieces rarely if ever reprinted before; and while I have not made this an invariable rule, and have not refrained from selecting one or two well known although outstanding poems, such as Lizette Woodworth Reese's "Tears" and Edwin Arlington Robinson's "Richard Cory," yet, whenever possible without injustice to the author or loss to the reader, I have endeavored to represent poems not previously quoted.

Should the reader discover that his favorite author or poem is absent from the list, I must urge him to remember that the judgment of contemporary poetry is always largely a matter of opinion, and that I do not present my selections as infallible. By inadvertence or through ignorance I may have omitted the most deserving of living poets; all that I can plead is that I have represented only those who in my opinion are best worth representing, and that it is for the reader either to confirm or to reject my judgment. I do firmly believe, however, that the volume contains some excellent work by

poets who have never been extensively anthologized: the vividness and beauty of the writings of Amory Hare, the imagination and pulsing strength of Edward H. Pfeiffer, the flawless lyricism of Brian Hooker, Kendall Banning, George Brandon Saul and others, all constitute a distinctive contribution that I am proud to be able to recommend.

It is a matter of some regret to me that certain poets have had to be omitted because of copyright difficulties. In order to meet any inquiries likely to arise, I may state that Edna St. Vincent Millay, acting through her agents, has refused to grant permission for the inclusion of any of her work; likewise that Robert Frost, in spite of his gracious willingness to be represented, has had to be excluded because of the prohibitive demands of his publishers. But to the great majority of publishers and authors, whose kindly aid and cooperation has made possible the publication of this anthology, I desire to express my thanks and to acknowledge my indebtedness, as follows:

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S. A. C

New York, June, 1924.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	v
ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT, *Vachel Lindsay*	142
ALDEBARAN AT DUSK, *George Sterling*	29
ALLEGORY, *Howard Mumford Jones*	175
ALTHOUGH I DECKED A CHAMBER FOR MY BRIDE, *George Santayana*	75
AND THE LITTLE WIND——, *John G. Neihardt*	168
ANNIVERSARY, *Hermann Hagedorn*	76
AS IN A PICTURE-BOOK, *Fannie Stearns Davis*	78
AS IN A ROSE-JAR, *Thomas S. Jones, Jr.*	17
AS IN THE MIDST OF BATTLE, *George Santayana*	7
ATAVISM, *Cale Young Rice*	41
AT SUNSET, *James B. Kenyon*	48
AUDIENCES, *Howard Mumford Jones*	19
AUGUST NIGHT IN THE CITY, AN, *Charles Hanson Towne*	150
AUTUMN SONG, *William Griffith*	167
BALLAD OF THE DEAD KING, *Dana Burnet*	106
BALLADE OF THE DREAMLAND ROSE, *Brian Hooker*	171
BEYOND A MOUNTAIN, *Witter Bynner*	62
BEYOND THE STARS, *Charles Hanson Towne*	20
BLACK PANTHER, THE, *John Hall Wheelock*	8
BROKEN DREAMS, *Morris Abel Beer*	43
CANTICLE, *William Griffith*	157
CHAMBERS OF IMAGERY, *Archibald MacLeish*	190
CHANGELING, THE, *Agnes Lee*	98
CHARTINGS, *Cale Young Rice*	3
CHASM, THE, *Hermann Hagedorn*	145
CITY FERRY, *Edward H. Pfeiffer*	146
COURAGE, *Helen Frazee-Bower*	103
DAFFODILS, *Lizette Woodworth Reese*	155

PAGE

DAWN BROKE TODAY, *Amory Hare* 164
DE GUSTIBUS, *John Erskine* 183
DIRGE, *George Sterling* 201
DREAMERS, *Power Dalton* 104
EDGAR ALLAN POE, *John Erskine* 125
ELEGY, *Thomas S. Jones, Jr.* 90
EYES OF GOD, THE, *Hermann Hagedorn* 18
FALCONER OF GOD, THE, *William Rose Benét* . . . 180
FIFTEEN, *Hermann Hagedorn* 152
FOG, *John Reed* 204
FORGOTTEN, *Thomas S. Jones, Jr.* 160
FOUNTAIN, THE, *Harry Kemp* 59
FROM A STREET CORNER, *Eleanor Hammond* 100
FUGITIVE, *David Morton* 159
FUTILE, THE, *Genevieve Taggard* 184
GARDEN OF SORROW, THE, *Hugh Wilgus Ramsaur* . . 128
GHOST, THE, *Hermann Hagedorn* 198
GHOST NIGHT, *Lizette Woodworth Reese* 45
GHOSTS, *Harold Trowbridge Pulsifer* 16
GRAY NORNS, THE, *Edwin Markham* 196
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN HOW THAT JUGGLER—FATE, *William Lindsey* 197
HAWAIIAN HURRICANE, *Genevieve Taggard* 33
HELEN IN HADES, *Harry Kemp* 134
HILL HUNGER, *Lillian Mayfield Roberts* 32
HORSEMAN, THE, *Idella Purnell* 182
HOW SWIFTLY THE BRIGHT COINS OF THOUGHT, *Amory Hare* 110
I FOUND A BEGGAR STARVING, *Morris Abel Beer* . . . 148
I KNOW A QUIET VALE, *Thomas S. Jones, Jr.* . . . 82
IMPROVIDENT, *Hesper Le Gallienne* 179
IN ARCADY BY MOONLIGHT, *Kendall Banning* . . . 60
IN MEMORIAM, *Theodore H. Banks, Jr.* 88
INTENTIONS, *John Richard Moreland* 81
ISLAND BORN, *Harold Vinal* 39
I SOMETIMES WONDER, *Amory Hare* 25
KINGS ARE PASSING DEATHWARD, THE, *David Morton* 111
L'ENVOI, *Willa Cather* 205

PAGE

LET ME LIVE OUT MY YEARS, *John G. Neihardt* . . 5
LIFE, *Amory Hare* 1
LIFE, *Edward H. Pfeiffer* 24
LILACS IN THE CITY, *Brian Hooker* 152
LONELINESS, *Ina Coolbrith* 26
LONELY GARDEN, THE, *Virginia Taylor McCormick* . 46
LOVE CAME BACK AT FALL O' DEW, *Lizette Woodworth Reese* 51
MADMAN'S SONG, *Elinor Wylie* 178
MEA CULPA, *Arturo Giovannitti* 9
MEMORY, *George Brandon Saul* 191
MEMORY, A, *Brookes More* 192
MIRACLE, *Lizette Woodworth Reese* 120
MIST AND THE SEA, THE, *Clinton Scollard* 27
MOTH, THE, *Robert Earl Brownlee* 199
MY LOVE WAS BORN WHEN STARS WERE DANCING, *Amory Hare* 61
MYSTERY, THE, *Charles Hanson Towne* 54
NAPOLEON IN HADES, *David Morton* 113
NIGHT ARMIES, THE, *Lee Wilson Dodd* 105
NIGHT OF GODS, THE, *George Sterling* 112
NIGHT OF RAIN, *Bernice Lesbia Kenyon* 50
NOCTURNE, *Witter Bynner* 44
NOT TILL THE TEMPLES OF OUR SECRET TRUST, *Arthur Davison Ficke* 77
NOVEMBER 11, 1918, *Agnes Lee* 144
NUSTSCHA, *Samuel Roth* 91
OFFERINGS, *Brian Hooker* 74
ON A DEAD MOTH, *David Morton* 202
ONCE ON A TIME, *Kendall Banning* 56
ONE BY ONE, ONE BY ONE, *Hazel Hall* 203
ONE PATH, *William Alexander Percy* 96
ON HEARING A BIRD SING AT NIGHT, *David Morton* . 30
PERSEPHONE, *Edith Willis Linn* 131
PHANTOM CARAVAN, THE, *Kendall Banning* 186
PLAY, THE, *Doris Kenyon* 185
POETS, *Thomas Curtis Clark* 118
RECOLLECTION, *Odell Shepard* 193

PAGE
Red Poppies in the Wheat, *John Richard Moreland* . 55
Return, The, *Joseph Auslander* 71
Richard Cory, *Edwin Arlington Robinson* 101
River, The, *Sara Teasdale* 97
School Boy Reads His Iliad, The, *David Morton* . 139
Sea Change, *Genevieve Taggard* 70
Sea Dream, The, *William Rose Benét* 36
Sea-Lands, The, *Orrick Johns* 64
Sea Lullaby, *Elinor Wylie* 85
Shakespeare, *Agnes Lee* 129
She Walks Serene, *Virginia Taylor McCormick* . . 102
"She Wandered After Strange Gods . . .," *Laura Benét* 173
Shelley, *Henry Van Dyke* 124
Ship of the Years, *Mary Sinton Leitch* 195
Singer of One Song, The, *Henry A. Beers* 117
Skull of Shakespeare, The, *George Sterling* . . . 130
Song, *Brian Hooker* 58
Sonnets, *Arthur Davison Ficke* 66, 115
Sonnets, *Florence Kilpatrick Mixter* 52
Sound of the Sea, The, *John Hall Wheelock* . . . 161
Storm, The, *Theodosia Garrison* 163
Success, *Katherine Lee Bates* 109
Tears, *Lizette Woodworth Reese* 2
The Sky Is Gray and Silent and Withdrawn, *Barbara Young* 34
Thermopylæ, *Robert Hillyer* 135
They Went Forth to Battle, *Shaemas O'Sheel* . . 121
This Day Is All a Greyness of Dim Rain, *Arthur Davison Ficke* 49
Three Girls, *Hazel Hall* 99
Three Poplars, *Witter Bynner* 84
Tiger-Woman, The, *Donald Davidson* 176
Time Lingers, *Dorothy Dow* 83
To a Child—Twenty Years Hence, *Arthur Davison Ficke* 87
To an Inhabitant of Paradise, *Scudder Middleton* . 141
To One I Love, *Amory Hare* 73

PAGE
To Song, *Thomas S. Jones, Jr.* 119
Trees That Lean over Water, The, *Marion Couthouy Smith* 31
Tulip Garden, A, *Amy Lowell* 158
Ulysses, *Beulah May* 114
Unknown Great, The, *Ina Coolbrith* 116
Unseen World, The, *James B. Kenyon* 200
Valley of the Shadow, The, *Edwin Arlington Robinson* 10
Wall Street Pit, The, *Edwin Markham* 151
Warriors of the Dream, *Hermann Hagedorn* . . . 122
Wasted Hours, *Medora Addison* 156
We Laughed and Parted, Nevermore to Meet, *Alfred R. Bellinger* 80
We Needs Must Be Divided in the Tomb, *George Santayana* 72
What if the Lapse of Ages Were a Dream? *Stephen Moylan Bird* 140
When the Wind Is Low, *Cale Young Rice* . . . 63
Willie Pitcher, *George Sterling* 86
Wind and Lyre, *Edwin Markham* 166
Winged Man, *Stephen Vincent Benét* 136
Wonder and a Thousand Springs, *William Alexander Percy* 42
Years Go, The, *George Brandon Saul* 6
Young Love Is Like a Rosebud, *Louis Fagon* . . . 57

MODERN AMERICAN
LYRICS

LIFE

Life is a shepherd lad who strides and sings
  Leading his flock, his brow bared to the sun,
Who knows the good grass and the hidden springs
  From whence streams of eternal beauty run.

Life is a cowherd, old, with bleeding lips,
  Driving fear-maddened cattle down a hill,
With matted hides worn raw at knees and hips,
  Knowing no sleep, no leisure to be still.

For one the dew, the hare-bell and the song;
For one the mire, the hurry and the thong.

Amory Hare.

TEARS

When I consider Life and its few years—
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street—
I wonder at the idleness of tears.
Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep;
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

Lizette Woodworth Reese.

CHARTINGS

There is no moon, only the sea and stars;
  There is no land, only the vessel's bow
  On which I stand alone and wonder how
Men ever dream of ports beyond the bars
  Of Finitude that fix the Here and Now.
A meteor falls, and foam beneath me breaks;
  Dim phosphor fires within it faintly die.
  So soft the sea is that it seems a sky
On which eternity to life awakes.

The universe is spread before my face,
  Worlds where perchance a million seas like this
  Are flowing and where tides of pain and bliss
Find, as on earth, so prevalent a place
  That nothing of their wont we there should miss.
The Universe, that man has dared to say
  Is but one Being—ah, courageous thought!
  Which is so vast that hope itself is fraught
With shame, while saying it, and shrinks away.

Shrinks, even as now! For clouds sweep up the skies
  And darken the wide waters circling round,
  From out whose deep arises the old sound
Of Terror unto which no tongue replies
  But Faith—that nothing ever shall confound.

Not only pagan Perseus but the Cross
  Is shrouded—with wild wind and wilder rain,
  That on me beat until my soul again
Sings unsurrendering to fears of Loss.

For this I know,—yea, though all else is hid
  Uncharted on the waters of our fate,
  All lands of Whence or Whither, whose estate
In vain imagination seeks to thrid,
  Yet cannot, for the fog within Death's gate,—
This thing I know, that life, whatever its source
  Or destiny, comes with an upward urge,
  And that we cannot thwart its mighty surge,
But with a joy in strife must keep the course.

Cale Young Rice.

LET ME LIVE OUT MY YEARS

Let me live out my years in heat of blood!
  Let me die drunken with the dreamer's wine!
Let me not see this soul-house built of mud
  Go toppling to the dust—a vacant shrine!

Let me go quickly like a candle light
  Snuffed out just at the heyday of its glow!
Give me high noon—and let it then be night!
  Thus would I go.

And grant me, when I face the grisly Thing,
  One haughty cry to pierce the gray Perhaps!
O let me be a tune-swept fiddlestring
  That feels the Master Melody—and snaps!

John G. Neihardt.

THE YEARS GO

On silver pinnacles I saw him stand
And lift the starred black flagon of desire,
But that was in a far and ancient land,
A morning-land of roses, song, and fire.
And O, the splendid gesture when he flung
The emptied flagon down the whirling night
Grown mad and dizzy with the song he sung—
The netted flame that bound his heart with light.

But now, in faltering silences, I see
A broken thing whose thoughts are settled dust
And in whose eyes are time and agony,
Who has no song to meet the future's thrust.
—He sits alone, his soul and passion thinned,
There where on dwindled hills I see him weep,
And life's a dry horn withering down the wind
That sweeps across the solitudes of sleep.

George Brandon Saul.

AS IN THE MIDST OF BATTLE

As in the midst of battle there is room
For thoughts of love, and in foul sin for mirth;
As gossips whisper of a trinket's worth
Spied by the death-bed's flickering candle-gloom;
As in the crevices of Caesar's tomb
The sweet herbs flourish on a little earth:
So in this great disaster of our birth
We can be happy, and forget our doom.
For morning, with a ray of tenderest joy
Gilding the iron heaven, hides the truth,
And evening gently woos us to employ
Our grief in idle catches. Such is youth;
Till from the summer's trace we wake, to find
Despair before us, vanity behind.

George Santayana.

THE BLACK PANTHER

There is a panther caged within my breast;
But what his name, there is no breast shall know
Save mine, nor what it is that drives him so,
Backward and forward, in relentless quest—
That silent rage, baffled but unsuppressed,
The soft pad of those stealthy feet that go
Over my body's prison to and fro,
Trying the walls forever without rest.

All day I feed him with my living heart;
But when the night puts forth her dreams and stars,
The inexorable Frenzy reawakes:
His wrath is hurled upon the trembling bars,
The eternal passion stretches me apart,
And I lie silent—but my body shakes.

John Hall Wheelock.

MEA CULPA

That man am I who wakes all night to mark
The coming of the dawn, and lest it creep
Past his closed eyes, he listens for the sheep
To bleat, the cock to crow, the dog to bark;
And then, ere the upspringing of the lark
His vigil weakens and he falls asleep,
Nor does he waken till the sun is steep
Into the noon, and in his soul the dark.
Yet though his hope is lost and gone his task,
Still he must rise and forth into the drawn
Mute day, without a purpose, nor dares ask
Whither his path leads or the reason why,
Save that love stayed when all passed with the dawn.
Lord, even as that foolish man am I.

Arturo Giovannitti.

There were faces to remember in the Valley of the Shadow,
There were faces unregarded, there were faces to forget;
There were fires of grief and fear that are a few forgotten ashes,
There were sparks of recognition that are not forgotten yet.
For at first, with an amazed and overwhelming indignation
At a measureless malfeasance that obscurely willed it thus,
They were lost and unacquainted—till they found themselves in others,
Who had groped as they were groping where dim ways were perilous.

There were lives that were as dark as are the fears and intuitions
Of a child who knows himself and is alone with what he knows;

There were pensioners of dreams and there were debtors of illusions,
All to fail before the triumph of a weed that only grows.
There were thirsting heirs of golden sieves that held not wine nor water,
And had no names in traffic nor more value than their toys:
There were blighted sons of wonder in the Valley of the Shadow,
Where they suffered and still wondered why their wonder made no noise.

There were slaves who dragged the shackles of a precedent unbroken,
Demonstrating the fulfillment of unalterable schemes,
Which had been, before the cradle, Time's inexorable tenants
Of what were now the dusty ruins of their father's dreams.
There were these, and there were many who had stumbled up to manhood,
Where they saw too late the road they should have taken long ago:
There were thwarted clerks and fiddlers in the Valley of the Shadow,
The commemorative wreckage of what others did not know.

And there were daughters older than the mothers who had borne them,

Being older in their wisdom, which is older than
the earth;
And they were going forward only farther into
darkness,
Unrelieved as were the blasting obligations of their
birth;
And among them, giving always what was not for
their possession,
There were maidens, very quiet, with no quiet in
their eyes;
There were daughters of the silence in the Valley
of the Shadow,
Each an isolated item in the family sacrifice.

There were creepers among catacombs where dull
regrets were torches,
Giving light enough to show what was there upon
the shelves—
Where there was more for them to see than pleasure
would remember
Of something that had been alive and once had been
themselves.
There were some who stirred the ruins with a solid
imprecation,
While as many fled repentance for the promise of
despair:
There were drinkers of wrong waters in the Valley
of the Shadow,
And all the sparkling ways were dust that once had
led them there.

There were some who knew the steps of Age incredibly beside them,
And his fingers upon shoulders that had never felt the wheel;
And their last of empty trophies was a gilded cup of nothing,
Which a contemplating vagabond would not have come to steal.
Long and often had they figured for a larger valuation,
But the size of their addition was the balance of a doubt;
There were gentlemen of leisure in the Valley of the Shadow,
Not allured by retrospection, disenchanted, and played out.

And among the dark endurances of unavowed reprisals
There were silent eyes of envy that saw little but saw well;
And over beauty's aftermath of hazardous ambitions
There were tears for what had vanished as they vanished where they fell.
Not assured of what was theirs, and always hungry for the nameless,
There were some whose only passion was for Time who made them cold;
There were numerous fair women in the Valley of the Shadow,

Dreaming rather less of heaven than of hell when they were old.

Now and then, as if to scorn the common touch of common sorrow,
There were some who gave a few the distant pity of a smile;
And another cloaked a soul as with an ash of human embers,
Having covered thus a treasure that would last him for a while.
There were many by the presence of the many disaffected,
Whose exemption was included in the weight that others bore:
There were seekers after darkness in the Valley of the Shadow,
And they alone were there to find what they were looking for.

So they were, and so they are; and as they came are coming others,
And among them are the fearless and the meek and the unborn;
And a question that has held us heretofore without an answer
May abide without an answer until we all have ceased to mourn.
For the children of the dark are more to name than are the wretched,
Or the broken, or the wearied, or the baffled, or the shamed:

There are builders of new mansions in the Valley
of the Shadow,
And among them are the dying and the blinded and
the maimed.

Edwin Arlington Robinson.

GHOSTS

You have familiar faces and warm hands,
  You kindly women and you friendly men
That speak to me from long-remembered lands
  That I have known and shall not know again.

You do not know that you are ghosts of dreams
  That once were flesh and blood,—you do not know
That you have no more being than bright gleams
  Of winter sunlight on deep-drifted snow.

You cannot see what valleys and what hills,
  You cannot see what sounding oceans lie
Between us in this room that laughter fills,
  The while we greet and talk and say good-bye.

When you have buried what remains of me
  In the brown earth below the wind-swept grass,
Cold carven marble will your witness be
  That you were with me then, and saw me pass.

One year from now, perhaps, or twenty more,
  You will attend me on that last gray ride
And never know you did not close the door,
  And never know how long ago I died.

Harold Trowbridge Pulsifer.

AS IN A ROSE-JAR

As in a rose-jar filled with petals sweet
Blown long ago in some old garden place
Mayhap, where you and I, a little space
Drank deep of love and knew that love was fleet;
Or leaves once gathered from a lost retreat
By one who never will again retrace
Her silent footsteps—one whose gentle face
Was fairer than the roses at her feet;

So, deep within the vase of memory
I keep my dust of roses fresh and dear
As in the days before I knew the smart
Of time and death. Nor aught can take from me
The haunting fragrance that still lingers here—
As in a rose-jar, so within my heart.

Thomas S. Jones, Jr.

THE EYES OF GOD

I see them nightly in my sleep.
The eyes of God are very deep.
There is no cave, no sea that knows
So much of unplumbed depth as those,
Or guards with walls or spectres dumb
Such treasures for the venturesome.

I feel them burning on my back.
The eyes of God are very black.
There is no substance and no shade
So black as God His own eyes made;
In earth or heaven no night, no day
At once so black, so bright as they.

I see them wheresoe'er I turn.
The eyes of God are very stern.
The eyes of God are golden fires
That kindle beacons, kindle pyres;
And where like slow moon-rays they pass
They burn up dead things as dry grass.

They wait, and are not hard to find.
The eyes of God are very kind.
They have great pity for weak things
And joy in everything with wings;
And glow, beyond all telling bright,
Each time a brave soul dares a flight.

Hermann Hagedorn.

AUDIENCES

Within, the dazzling lights are hushed and low.
The music sinks to a faint breathlessness;
There is a rustling of a woman's dress,
A child cranes forward, listening; row on row
Of strained, exalted faces seem to glow
Like white flames in the dusk with sharp distress,
Beholding Juliet dead; the aching press
Of pain stabs the dry throat and will not go.

Without, swung in illimitable space,
Across the soundless stage the planet runs;
Gigantically like shadows on the waste
And silence of the night, the high gods lean,
Shoulder to shoulder, peering on the scene
Across the footlights of the spinning suns.

Howard Mumford Jones.

Three days I heard them grieve when I lay dead.
(It was so strange to me that they should weep!)
Tall candles burned about me in the dark,
And a white crucifix was on my breast,
And a great silence filled the lonesome room.

I heard one whisper, "Lo, the dawn is breaking,
And he has lost the wonder of the day."
Another came whom I had loved on earth,
And kissed my brow and brushed my dampened
hair.
Softly she spoke, "O that he should not see
The April that his spirit bathed in! Birds
Are singing in the orchard, and the grass
That soon shall cover him is growing green.
The daisies whiten on the emerald hills,
And the immortal magic that he loved
Wakens again—and he has fallen asleep."
Another said: "Last night I saw the moon
Like a tremendous lantern shine in heaven,
And I could only think of him—and sob.
For I remembered evenings wonderful
When he was faint with life's sad loveliness,
And watched the silver ribbons wandering far

Along the shore, and out upon the sea.
Oh, I remembered how he loved the world,
The sighing ocean and the flaming stars,
The everlasting glamour God had given—
His tapestries that wrap the earth's wide room.
I minded me of mornings filled with rain
When he would sit and listen to the sound
As if it were lost music from the spheres.
He loved the crocus and the hawthorn-hedge,
He loved the shining gold of buttercups,
And the low droning of the drowsy bees
That boomed across the meadows. He was glad
At dawn and sundown; glad when Autumn came
With her worn livery and scarlet crown,
And glad when Winter rocked the earth to rest.
Strange that he sleeps to-day when Life is young,
And the wild banners of the Spring are blowing
With green inscriptions of the old delight."
I heard them whisper in the quiet room.
I longed to open then my sealèd eyes,
And tell them of the glory that was mine.
There was no darkness where my spirit flew,
There was no night beyond the teeming world.
Their April was like Winter where I roamed;
Their flowers were like stones where now I fared.
Earth's day! it was as if I had not known
What sunlight meant! . . . Yea, even as they grieved
For all that I had lost in their pale place,
I swung beyond the borders of the sky,
And floated through the clouds, myself the air,
Myself the ether, yet a matchless being

Whom God had snatched from penury and pain
To draw across the barricades of heaven.
I clomb beyond the sun, beyond the moon;
In flight on flight I touched the highest star;
I plunged to regions where the spring is born,
Myself (I asked not how) the April wind,
Myself the elements that are of God.
Up flowery stairways of eternity
I whirled in wonder and untrammeled joy,
An atom, yet a portion of His dream—
His dream that knows no end . . .
I was the rain,
I was the dawn, I was the purple east,
I was the moonlight on enchanted nights,
(Yet time was lost to me); I was a flower
For one to pluck who loved me; I was bliss,
And rapture, splendid moments of delight;
And I was prayer, and solitude, and hope;
And always, always, always I was Love.
I tore asunder flimsy doors of time,
And through the windows of my soul's new sight
I saw beyond the ultimate bounds of space.
I was all things that I had loved on earth—
The very moonbeam in that quiet room,
The very sunlight one had dreamed I lost,
The soul of the returning April grass,
The spirit of the evening and the dawn,
The perfume in unnumbered hawthorn blooms.
There was no shadow on my perfect peace,
No knowledge that was hidden from my heart.
I learned what music means; I read the years;
I found where rainbows hide, where tears begin;

I trod the precincts of things yet unborn.
Yea, while I found all wisdom (being dead),
They grieved for me. . . . I should have grieved
for them!

Charles Hanson Towne.

LIFE

There was a low, dull droning in my ears,
I saw faint bodies bended, dim and gray,
And faces soft behind a blur of tears.
Cold lights like weary stars hung far away.

And muffled voices pelted me like rain.
I hardly heard and did not understand.
White lips about me seemed to cry with pain.
From every shadow poured a stretching hand.

There was a scent of roses lost in smoke.
A famished taste grew ghostly in the air,
And shapes untouched like bubbles soared and broke . . .
There was a haunting vagueness everywhere.

Then through the shapes a wave of motion went.
Toward me they came and never turned aside.
Through me they passed . . . I knew not what it meant,
And then I half remembered I had died.

Edward H. Pfeiffer.

I SOMETIMES WONDER

I sometimes wonder if the roses grow
  Faint-hearted in the blinding summer sun,
Waiting the slow, unerring hand of time,
  The grief of petals falling one by one.

I wonder if they envy dandelions
  Who spring to deepest being in a day,
And who, as little stars, come down from heaven,
  So riotously bloom and haste away.

I thought a frail rose murmured low to-day,—
  "Ah! when the first brief fragrancy is gone,
To be dispersed upon the flying breeze,
  Whirled with a song into oblivion!"

Amory Hare.

LONELINESS

The waning moon was up,—the stars
  Were faint, and very few;
The vines about the window-sill
  Were wet with falling dew;

A little cloud before the wind
  Was drifting down the west;
I heard the moaning of the sea
  In its unquiet rest;

Until, I know not from what grief
  Or thought of other years,
The hand I leaned upon was cold
  And wet with falling tears.

Ina Coolbrith.

THE MIST AND THE SEA

The mist crept in from the sea
  Out of the void and the vast;
And it bore the silver rain
A shimmering guest in its train,
And many a murmuring strain
  Of the ships that sailed in the past;
Soft as sleep's footfalls be
The mist crept in from the sea.

The mist crept in from the sea
  And folded the length of the shore
In the clasp of its mothering arms
As though it would shield from harms;
And lulled were the loud alarms,
  And lost was the rage and roar
Of the surge, so soothingly
The mist crept in from the sea.

The mist crept in from the sea,
  White, impalpable, strange;
Full of the wafture of wings,
Of eerie and eldritch things,
Of visions and vanishings
  Ever in shift and change;
Silently, hauntingly,
The mist crept in from the sea.

The mist crept in from the sea,
  And bode for a space, and then
It heard the imperious call
Of the deep, transcending all,
And it knew itself as the thrall
  Of the world-old master of men,
So, still as the dreams that flee,
The mist crept back to the sea.

Clinton Scollard.

ALDEBARAN AT DUSK

Thou art the star for which all evening waits—
O star of peace, come tenderly and soon,
Nor heed the drowsy and enchanted moon,
Who dreams in silver at the eastern gates
Ere yet she brim with light the blue estates
Abandoned by the eagles of the noon.
But shine thou swiftly on the sparkling dune
And woodlands where the twilight hesitates.

Above that wide and ruby lake to-West,
Wherein the sunset waits reluctantly,
Stir silently the purple wings of Night.
She stands afar, upholding to her breast,
As mighty murmurs reach her from the sea,
Thy lone and everlasting rose of light.

George Sterling.

ON HEARING A BIRD SING AT NIGHT

Out of what ancient summer of soft airs
  Was spun this song that stills each listening leaf—
This silver, moon-bright minstreling that fares
  Through all old time, still laden with a grief?
Some hidden bird, by turrets and black bars,
  Where one had languished for her face was fair,
Heard thus some troubadour beneath the stars,
  And learned this song of vanished hands and hair.

Who knows what golden story first gave birth
  To this old music that is heavy-sweet
With gardens long forgotten of the earth,
  With passion that was silver wings and feet,
To cross the silent centuries and be heard,
Calling again in this dream-troubled bird!

David Morton.

THE TREES THAT LEAN OVER WATER

The trees that lean over water,
  Living enchanted days,
I have known them on quiet farmlands,
  I have seen them on golden bays;
Dreaming in calm, cold twilights,
  Musing in noonday suns—
There are trees that lean over water
  Wherever the water runs.

There is nothing in days or seasons
  These rapt trees ever know;
The only world for their dwelling
  Is the crystal world below.
They are deaf to the wind's alluring,
  They are dumb through its stormy song;
They answer only the water
  That whispers and glides along.

The trees that lean over water,
  They miss the untroubled sky;
They lose its fathomless splendor
  As the starry march goes by;
In their own boughs entangled
  They view the eternal suns.

—There are trees that lean over water
  Wherever the water runs.

Marion Couthouy Smith.

HILL HUNGER

I think that something in the hill child dies
When he is taken to the level lands.
The man bred by an ocean understands,
And he will tell you that his sick heart sighs
For hiss of surf—and all his being cries
For roar of waves, and spray upon his hands:
Ever beneath his weary feet the sands—
Ever a sail before his searching eyes.

And so I think the hill child always sees
That broken line inked in against the skies,
Where saffron sunset drops to meet the trees
Upon the hill tops—and the night hawk flies—
And when his mind cannot recapture these
I think that something in the hill child dies.

Lillian Mayfield Roberts.

HAWAIIAN HURRICANE

Thunder and booming down within the womb
Of hollow earth, that grows and dims and dies;
Apart the stars are rushing; the night skies
Are flecked with white and drenched in foam and spume.
The lawn is strewn with briars. In the flume
I hear the crashing cane, and there are cries
Of wounded birds that fall to earth and rise
One-winged; and tall black palms thresh in the gloom.

Oh, Tempest, take me in Thy bold embrace!
More lover, Thou, than men whose voices fret
Against their ills. In storm, wind round me wet
White arms—my sad confuséd sense erase:
I know not mankind, nor know Thee, and yet
More love Thy majesty than any face.

Genevieve Taggard.

THE SKY IS GRAY AND SILENT

The sky is gray and silent and withdrawn
From the cold earth. A hundred frightened birds,
Like black, blown leaves, are battling down the wind.
The trees, like black, blown laces, too, are flung
Against the somber garment of the dusk.
The hills, protesting, drab and still to-night,
To-morrow shall be radiant in white.

I have come in from running with the wind—
The mad, cold wind that stings me with delight!
The wind that frees my blood and fires my brain
With the quick consciousness of new desire
For things unnamed of little human lips.

I am come in unto a futile fire,
And these close comforts that to-night, somehow,
I cannot brook! When I have closed the door
Against the wild encroachments of that wind,
I want to turn again and fling it wide,
And stretch my arms, and bid its fury sweep
Into the corners of these careful walls
And smite them with a prescience of the vast—
The boundless Unattained that waits for me.

But, no. I am come in. The door is shut.
I shall sit down before the ample fire
That good folk think should satisfy my need.
Have I not shelter, bread, and books to read?

But I am gray and silent and withdrawn
Like the cold sky. A chill unfallen snow
Chains my free spirit with its frozen breath.
See! through my window the unprisoned birds
Battle the blessèd wind that honors them!
And I sit fettered here—beside a fire.

Barbara Young.

THE SEA DREAM

To-night the loud waters, the loud and crying
waters, the wild and silvered waters of the sea
are in my mind,
Their booming and their thundering on sands the
waves are plundering, the high foaming combers
in charging ranks aligned.
I strip on the shingle and I race to the kiss of them,
the cold beryl welter of wave on swelling wave,
The desperate rush and hiss of them, the drenching,
blinding bliss of them, the kingly roaring
waters, so strong my soul to save!

Oh, high along the sands, where nods not any
flower, the silver, crumbling moon lights the
silver webs they spread!
With passion, with power she sways their splendid
hour, and a man's heart leaps to meet them, as
quickened from the dead.
I slough the gray, ungracious and soiled and tat-
tered seeming of the might that was my mind.
Now, oh, better far to be
At dawn afloat and dreaming where the sea-birds
waken screaming on the green gleaming rollers
far out, far out at sea!

For there is deep silence from all the wrangling voices, and there is clean rapture undaunted by desire,
Where the world swings and poises, and the flashing blue rejoices, and, misty on the sea-line, some foreland glints with fire,—
With fire aripple around me, as the magic sun and blinding sweeps high through mists of rose, and the smell of dawn grows keen.
Time's mills, for their grinding, must wait upon my finding, ere I return to cities to sing what I have seen!

To sing of the faces that meet the midnight swimmer who breasts the billows strongly through silver sequins bright
Till moonbeams filter dimmer, and white the faces glimmer of mermen and mermaids around him in the night,
With conch-shells spumy blowing and moonshine tresses flowing, and green eyes, and gray eyes, and lips like coral wet,
All gleaming and glowing, and seines phantasmal throwing to maze the breathing human in many a ghostly net;

To sing of that spirit who brings the breeze ere dawning; a cloud-enfolded angel, a flash of jeweled wings;
Who clears night's sable awning from waves that shudder fawning to heel, like hounds that scuffle about the feet of kings;

To sing of haunted waters, of sacred, moon-drenched
waters, the gold of morning waters,—that fade
away in light. . . .
For walls are still around me. The dawn hath only
found me a thrall to iron cities, sea-dreaming
through the night!

William Rose Benét.

ISLAND BORN

I

My mother bore me in an island town,
So I love windy water and the sight
Of luggers sailing by in thick moonlight—
I wear the sea as others wear a crown.
My mother bore me near the spinning water,
Water was the first sound upon my ears,
And near the sea her mother bore her daughter,
And there were windows looking on the weirs.

Ever a wind is moaning where I go,
I never stand at night upon a quay,
But I must strain my eyes for sails that blow,
But I must strain my ears to hear the sea.
My mother bore me in an island town—
I wear the sea as others wear a crown.

II

My mother loved the way of ships that go
Out to the sea, their bows against the foam;
She loved the way of ocean mews and so
It was not strange an island was my home,
Or that I cried first in an island town,

Or in a sea town sought my earliest words.
My mother loved the sight of foggy boughs,
She loved the crying of out-going birds.

My mother's folk have many things to tell
Of vessels that went by the village inn,
The sudden clanging of the lighthouse bell,
The talk of seamen and the yarns they spin.
My mother loved reef water and the foam:
It was not strange an island was my home.

Harold Vinal.

ATAVISM

I leant out over a ledging cliff and looked down into
the sea,
Where weed and kelp and dulse swayed, in green
translucency;
Where the abalone clung to the rock and the star-
fish lay about,
Purpling the sands that slid away under the silver
trout.

And the sea-urchin too was there, and the sea-
anemone.
It was a world of watery shapes and hues and
wizardry.
And I felt old stirrings wake in me, under the tides
of time,
Sea-hauntings I had brought with me out of the
ancient slime.

And now, as I muse, I cannot rid my senses of the
spell
That in a tidal trance all things around me drift
and swell
Under the sea of the Universe, down into which
strange eyes
Keep peering at me, as I peered, with wonder and
surmise.

Cale Young Rice.

WONDER AND A THOUSAND SPRINGS

Along the just-returning green
That fledges field and berm and brake
The purple-veined white violets lean,
Scarcely awake;

And pear and plum and apple trees,
Evoked to bloom before they leaf,
Lift cloudy branches filled with bees
Strange as new grief.

A thousand springs will poise and pass
And leave no track beneath the sun:
Some gray-eyed lad, cool-cheeked as grass,
Will watch each one,

And wonder, as I wonder here,
And find no clue I have not found,
And smile before he joins me, near
But underground.

William Alexander Percy.

BROKEN DREAMS

Why should I cling to my broken dreams,
  Tears, and the bitter, starless night,
The empty house on the lonely road,
  Whence love so long ago took flight?

Why should I cling to those fragrant hours,
  Like withered rose-leaves, faint and old,
When spring is singing again to me
  From laughing hills of green and gold?

I cannot tell what makes me turn
  From April's voice to dreams long dead;
But still I seek to nurse the wound,
  Whose pain but brings me tears instead.

Morris Abel Beer.

NOCTURNE

Soft through a mist there's a memory creeping,
To tell you in dreams that are wistful and low,
Soft through the mist between waking and sleeping—
Of love as she came to you long, long ago. . . .

Tells you of love as a deathless maiden
Who plays with a moonbeam and laughs like a child. . . .
Her eyes are how full!—and her lashes how laden
With starlight!—her glances how level and mild!

See how her finger-tips fitfully glisten!
See with what wonder her forehead is deep!—
She breathes, and you tremble . . . she waits, and you listen . . .
She waits, and you breathe not . . . she breathes . . . and you sleep.

Witter Bynner.

GHOST NIGHT

A hundred strange things
  Looked in at the door;
There went a soft foot
  Across the old floor.

Oh, lovely and lost,
  It was you who were there,
Wrapped round in the cloak
  Of your golden long hair!

The house grew as sweet
  As a just-lit flower,
On the edge of the rain,
  In an April hour.

Wrapped round in the cloak
  Of your golden long hair,
Oh, lovely and lost,
  It was you who were there!

I fell at your feet;
  Enough you were near,
Although but a ghost
  With the ghosts of the year!

Lizette Woodworth Reese.

THE LONELY GARDEN

I walked about your garden
  In the dew-drenched early day,
The sun hung o'er the mountains,
  The mist was like a spray.

The cardinals and robins
  Poured music on the air
But their songs were sorrow laden
  Because you were not there.

The grass upon the hillside,
  A mass of tangled gray,
Had lost its velvet greenness
  Because you were away.

The flowers in your borders
  Looked pale and wan to me;
They would not bloom their brightest
  Were you not there to see.

A flash of crimson beckoned
  From a corner quite apart;
Where choked by weeds and brambles
  I found a bleeding heart.

I bent my head in anguish
To kiss the blood-red stain,
Libation for the Princess
Who will not come again.

So I left my lonely garden
While my wonder waked anew
That the sun should go on shining
When the grass grew over you.

Virginia Taylor McCormick.

AT SUNSET

Love came across the meadows
  At the dawning of the day;
Before him fled the shadows,
  Past the mountains, far away;
Love came, a dear, unbidden guest;
The mated bird sang by its nest;
While morning caroled in my breast,
  And Oh, the joy of living!

Love came across the meadows
  At the dawning of the day,
But left me in the shadows
  When night fell, cold and gray;
He fled, the false and fickle guest;
The bird drooped by the empty nest;
The evening chilled my lonely breast,
  And Oh, the woe of living!

James B. Kenyon.

THIS DAY IS ALL A GREYNESS OF DIM RAIN

(From "Rue des Vents")

This day is all a grayness of dim rain.
Earth and the sky alike are wrapped in fold
Of the dim memory of some ancient pain,
Some wrong of bitter gods endured of old;
All gray and spent, save where I see you move
With lifted golden head and laughing eyes
And breast so delicate that no power but love
Could dwell there with his singing sorceries.
Proud little head, lifted amid the gloom!
Gay serious little heart, swift-running feet!
Into the shadowed broodings of this room
You bring the light of regions far and sweet.
Your laughter is a song, a golden beam
Out of the western rain-mist of my dream.

Arthur Davison Ficke.

NIGHT OF RAIN

Better the empty sorrow in the dark,
The crying heart, the crying eyes that stare
Blindly till morning, than the bitter glare
Of rainy street-lights, threaded spark to spark
To lure me from this room in my distress,
Out where you pass—far out beyond my sight.
Better to grope in this small space of night
For sleep, for peace, or any nothingness.

You are not here, and you will not return;
And if you came—the door is shut, and locked
And sealed with pride, and barred across with pain;
And now it is for quiet that I yearn. . . .
I should but lie and listen, if you knocked—
Rain in my heart, and at my window rain.

Bernice Lesbia Kenyon.

LOVE CAME BACK AT FALL O' DEW

Love came back at fall o' dew,
  Playing his old part;
But I had a word or two
  That would break his heart.

"He who comes at candlelight,
  That should come before,
Must betake him to the night
  From a barrèd door."

This the word that made us part
  In the fall o' dew;
This the word that brake his heart—
  Yet it brake mine, too.

Lizette Woodworth Reese.

SONNETS

(From "Out of Mist")

I

How shall I learn to live with this strange love
That has no place among the things I know?
For it is like a dream wherein I move
Upon a sea in whose strong undertow
I must succumb, save for some power of will
To battle with uncharted streams of death.
Ofttimes I struggle to recall that still
And brooding day when, with confiding breath,
I reached across the drifting sands to you
Whose strength was rock. But ah! how suddenly
That whirling cloud from out the unbroken blue
Swept us, unmindful, to the open sea,
Where, on relentless tides, moon-piloted,
We drift to shores of the forgotten dead.

II

How readily the dreaming mind forgives
The scar that glows relentlessly by day
And, in forgetfulness of pain, relives
The undimmed beauty of a far-off May.

Thus tenderly you came to me last night
And for one sleeping heart-beat held me near. . . .
One heart-beat whose far echo of delight
It seemed must ring from sphere to answering sphere.
Then suddenly I woke and you were gone
And once again the scar burned livid red.
How profitless my dream when with the dawn
I waken with a heart uncomforted
And, searching, know not if I grieve for hate
Or for a love that Hell cannot abate.

III

Here in the sanctuary of my dreams,
How many a bud shall flower when I am dead!
Ah, my belovèd, even now it seems
As if they bent and swayed above my head.
What though the skeptics proved that death were real
And you were gone from me a million years
Yet would some restless daffodil reveal
The image God re-captured from my tears.
And you, with silent lips forever cold,
Might vainly seek my hand across the dark
But some old dream would flash; that day would hold
At dusk the promise of the rainbow's arc. . . .
There is not any grave where love may rest
Until illusion crumbles in earth's breast.

Florence Kilpatrick Mixter.

THE MYSTERY

They who have loved too well—and been betrayed,
Tried in the fire and utterly dismayed,
  Strange, is it not, how they return to Love,
And bare their hearts to his great gleaming blade!

Charles Hanson Towne.

RED POPPIES IN THE WHEAT

Life is red poppies in the wheat,
  Love be not late!
Keen is time's sickle; years are fleet;
Life is red poppies in the wheat,
Filled with brave dreams and crimson sweet
  But bound by fate!
Life is red poppies in the wheat,
  Love be not late!

John Richard Moreland.

ONCE ON A TIME

Once on a time, once on a time,
  Before the Dawn began,
There was a nymph of Dian's train
  Who was beloved of Pan;
Once on a time a peasant lad
  Who loved a lass at home;
Once on a time a Saxon king
  Who loved a queen of Rome.

The world has but one song to sing,
  And it is ever new;
The first and last of all the songs,
  For it is ever true;
A little song, a tender song,
  The only song it hath:
"There was a youth of Ascalon
  Who loved a girl of Gath."

A thousand thousand years have gone,
  And eons still shall pass,
Yet shall the world forever sing
  Of him who loved a lass—
An olden song, a golden song,
  And sing it unafraid;
"There was a youth, once on a time,
  Who dearly loved a maid."

Kendall Banning.

YOUNG LOVE IS LIKE A ROSEBUD

Young love is like a rosebud
  That blushes to confess,
And fragrant is the rosebud,
  Each breath a soft caress;

Yet lonely, too, the rosebud
  And sad, for oft appears
Within its glistening dew-drops
  The wistful glow of tears.

Louis Fagon.

SONG

The skies are dimly bright, Love,
  The stars like pulses beat
That falter with delight, Love,
  And the breeze is maddening-sweet—
  The breeze is maddening-sweet!
Borne soft along its way,
  The sighs of sleepy flowers
  From bowers to dusky bowers
Its laden wings delay.

The world is hushed in shade, Love,
  And shadowed all my heart;
This night for us was made, Love. . .
  And we so far apart—
  And we so far apart!
Unheeded on my ear
  The folded whispers fall—
  In vain the shadows call,
Because thou art not here.

Brian Hooker.

THE FOUNTAIN

In a green garden of delight
A hidden fountain played all night,
A gray and moving ghost of sound
That floated over phantom ground,
Now near, now far, as the wind blew.
The fountain was my love for you;
The wind, your moods as light as air;
The black night was my love's despair.

Harry Kemp.

IN ARCADY BY MOONLIGHT

In Arcady by moonlight (where only lovers go),
There is a pool where fairest of all the roses grow.
Why are the moonlit roses so sweet beyond compare?
Among their purple shadows my love is waiting there.

To Arcady by moonlight the roads are open wide,
But only joy can enter, and only joy abide;
There is the peace unending that perfect faith can know,
In Arcady by moonlight (where only lovers go).

Kendall Banning.

MY LOVE WAS BORN WHEN STARS WERE DANCING

My Love was born when stars were dancing,
  The tide was high and the moon was full,
The surf was white and the sea-gulls glancing;
  So bright was she, and beautiful.

My Love was named when trees were tossing,
  When brooks ran, singing, toward the sea,
And brown trout leapt by the stony crossing;
  So slim and swift and glad was she.

My Love was wed when the spring was young,
  When the western sky was a painted splendor,
And the crescent moon by a thread was hung;
  So sweet was she, so wise and tender.

My Love was buried when snow was deep,
  And the moon sailed over the ghostly hill,
And I feared to stir, and I dared not weep;
  So mute was she, so white and still.

Amory Hare.

BEYOND A MOUNTAIN

Somewhere beyond a mountain lies
A lake the color of your eyes—
And I am mirrored like a flight
Of swallows in that evening-light.

Lovers eternal, side by side,
Closed in the elemental tide,
Nurture the root of every land—
So is my hand within your hand.

Somewhere beyond an island ships
Bear on their sails, as on your lips
You bear and tend it from the sun,
The blossom of oblivion.

Eternal lovers, in whom death
And reaching rains have mingled breath,
Are drawn by the same draught apart—
So is my heart upon your heart.

Somewhere beyond a desert rolls
An ocean that is both our souls—
Where we shall come, whatever be,
I unto you, you unto me.

Witter Bynner.

WHEN THE WIND IS LOW

When the wind is low, and the sea is soft,
  And the far heat-lightning plays
On a rim of the west where dark clouds nest
  On a darker bank of haze;
When I lean o'er the rail with you that I love
  And gaze to my heart's content;
I know that the heavens are there above—
  But you are my firmament.

When the phosphor-stars are thrown from the bow
  And the watch climbs up the shroud;
When the dim mast dips as the vessel slips
  Through the foam as it seethes aloud;
I know that the years of our life are few,
  And fain as a bird to flee,
That time is as brief as a drop of dew—
  But you are Eternity.

Cale Young Rice.

Would I were on the sea-lands,
  Where winds know how to sting;
And in the rocks at midnight
  The lost long murmurs sing.

Would I were with my first love
  To hear the rush and roar
Of spume below the doorstep
  And winds upon the door.

My first love was a fair girl
  With ways forever new;
And hair a sunlight yellow,
  And eyes a morning blue.

The roses, have they tarried
  Or are they dun and frayed?
If we had stayed together,
  Would love, indeed, have stayed?

Ah, years are filled with learning,
  And days are leaves of change!
And I have met so many
  I knew . . . and found them strange.

But on the sea-lands tumbled
  By winds that sting and blind,
The nights we watched so silent
  Come back, come back to mind.

I mind about my first love,
  And hear the rush and roar
Of spume below the doorstep
  And winds upon the door.

Orrick Johns.

SONNETS

(From "Sonnets of a Portrait-Painter")

I

VIEW FROM HEIGHTS

I am in love with high far-seeing places
That look on plains half-sunlight and half-storm,—
In love with hours when from the circling faces
Veils pass, and laughing fellowship glows warm.
You who look on me with grave eyes where rapture
And April love of living burn confessed—
The gods are good! The world lies free to capture!
Life has no walls! O take me to your breast!
Take me,—be with me for a moment's span!—
I am in love with all unveilèd faces,
I seek the wonder at the heart of man;
I would go up to the far-seeing places.
While youth is ours, turn to me for a space
The marvel of your rapture-lighted face!

II

POSSESSION

To-day, grown rich with what I late have won,
Across the dusk I reach my hand to you.
Cold as a leaf long pillowing a stone
Your hand takes mine, like something strange and new.
So soon grown careless? . . . No, for in your eyes
A tenderness still lives, half-shy, half-bold. . . .
Then sudden wisdom to my trouble cries:
I know you still my love, but not the old.
That which I loved and won now all is gone;
She was an hour, a moment, a swift mood,—
Vanished forever into deeps unknown,—
And a new creature rules your brain and blood.
Yesterday you were mine, beloved and fair.
To-day I seek,—another love is there.

III

REINCARNATION

What if some lover in a far-off Spring,
Down the long passage of a hundred years,
Should breathe his longing through the words I sing—
And close the book, dazed by a woman's tears?
Does it mean aught to you that such might be?
Ah! we far-seekers! . . . Surely thus were proved
From dream to deed the souls of you and me:—
Thus only were it real that we had loved.
Gray ghosts blown down the desolate moors of time!
Poor wanderers, lost to any hope of rest!
Joined by the measure of a faltering rhyme!
Sundered by deep division of the breast!
Sundered by all wherein we both have part;
Joined by the far-world seeking of each heart.

IV

THE TIDINGS

They brought me tidings; and I did not hear
More than a fragment of the words they said.
Their further speech died dull upon my ear;
For my rapt spirit otherwhere had fled—
Fled unto you in other times and places.
Old memories winged about me in glad flight.
I saw your lips of longing and delight,—
Your grave glad eyes beyond their chattering faces.
I saw a world where you have been to me
More than the sun, more than the wakening wind.
I saw a brightness that they could not see.
And yet I seemed as smitten deaf and blind.
I heard but fragments of the words they said.
Life wanes. The sunlight darkens. You are dead.

Arthur Davison Ficke.

SEA-CHANGE

You are no more, but sunken in a sea
Sheer into dream, ten thousand leagues, you fell;
And now you lie green-golden, while a bell
Swings with the tide, my heart; and all is well
Till I look down, and wavering, the spell—
Your loveliness—returns. There in the sea,
Where you lie amber-pale and coral-cool,
You are most loved, most lost, most beautiful.

Genevieve Taggard.

THE RETURN

When the last hearth fire drowses to the drone
Of an embered blow, I shall be standing there
In the warm shadow close behind your chair
Where the grave depth of quiet takes a tone
Of deeper, graver quiet from your own:
And should you feel a tenderness on your hair,
And on your eyes the hovering breath of prayer,
Be not afraid and make no startled moan.

For it is only I that am returned
To look on you and love you out of pain,
And it is but my hand on you again,
My blessing even through the darkness burned;
And should you feel the nearness of a tear
Over your lips, know that my lips are near.

Joseph Auslander.

WE NEEDS MUST BE DIVIDED IN THE TOMB

We needs must be divided in the tomb,
For I would die among the hills of Spain,
And o'er the treeless melancholy plain
Await the coming of the final gloom.
But thou—O pitiful!—wilt find scant room
Among thy kindred by the northern main,
And fade into the drifting mist again,
The hemlocks' shadow or the pines' perfume.
Let gallants lie beside their ladies' dust,
In one cold grave, with mortal love inurned;
Let the sea part our ashes, if it must.
The souls fled thence which love immortal burned,
For they were wedded without bond of lust,
And nothing of our heart to earth returned.

George Santayana.

TO ONE I LOVE

To one I love
  I have been all things beautiful.
I am the stars, the light, the breath,
The music of the world set forth for him;
And I am witchery, and even woe,
Woe of a quality akin to joy!
The thought of me is subtly intertwined
With twilight and the wheeling swallows' cry,
With doorways dimly lit; and darkening fields;
The long road's ending, and the lantern's gleam;
With huddled roofs adream beneath the moon.
For I am that by which he is reborn.
The dearness of the hearth by candle-light;
The mystery wherein two spirits blend;
I have the strange remoteness of the heavens
And yet the patient nearness of the grass.

Amory Hare.

OFFERINGS

If I could sing as no man ever sang—
  Find the red heart of that unspoken lore
  That all sweet sound is only hunger for,—
If I might call the moonlight on the sea,
  The river-lily's dream, the soul of dew,
To lead the voices of my harmony,
  I should have songs, O Love, to sing to you.

If I could love as no man ever loved—
  The seeking of the girl unsatisfied,
  The passion of the bridegroom for the bride,
The mother's wonder in her newborn son,
  The boy's fresh rapture in his life come true—
If I might compass all these loves in one,
  I should have love, O Love, to bring to you.

Brian Hooker.

ALTHOUGH I DECKED A CHAMBER FOR MY BRIDE

Although I decked a chamber for my bride,
And found a moonlit garden for the tryst
Wherein all flowers looked happy as we kissed,
Hath the deep heart of me been satisfied?
The chasm 'twixt our spirits yawns as wide
Though our lips meet, and clasp thee as I list,
The something perfect that I love is missed,
And my warm worship freezes into pride.
But why—O waywardness of nature!—why
Seek farther in the world? I had my choice,
And we said we were happy, you and I.
Why in the forest should I hear a cry,
Or in the sea an unavailing voice,
Or feel a pang to look upon the sky?

George Santayana.

ANNIVERSARY

I wonder had you wept or had you smiled,
Could you have read the book of things to be
That summer dusk we sat beside the sea,
And, like the children that we were, beguiled
Our wiser sense to think that we but whiled
An hour away in casual company?
Could you have known what now is memory,
I wonder had you wept or had you smiled?

Men call you happy. Boldly I believe
That year by year I see the gladness grow;
Yet care and pain and vigils bravely kept
Gauntly confront the joys. That August eve
Could you have dreamed the pain the happiest know
I wonder had you smiled or had you wept?

Hermann Hagedorn.

NOT TILL THE TEMPLES OF OUR SECRET TRUST

(From "Epitaph for the Poet V")

Not till the temples of our secret trust
Are blown in mist across a rainy sky,
And music crumbles wholly into dust,
And carven marbles into silence die—
Not until what we dream and what we know
Are merged and made inseparably the same,
And beauty dead a hundred years ago
Ceases to haunt us with a living flame—
Not till the harvest of slow-ripening Time
Is brought in golden sheaves triumphant home
And planets round into the perfect rhyme
Of death after their million years aroam—
Not until then shall any strangeness move
From its fixed place the strangeness of our love.

Arthur Davison Ficke.

AS IN A PICTURE-BOOK

My mother died when I was young,
  Yet not too young to know
What terror round the dark halls clung
  That aching day of snow.

I knew she could not comfort me.
  I sat there all alone.
Cold sorrow held me quietly
  Dumb as a winter stone.

And yet I seemed to watch it all
  As in a picture-book:
The silent people in the hall,
  My father's frozen look,—

The heaped white roses, and my dress
  So very black and new.
I watched it without weariness. . . .
  Ah, how the snow-blast blew! . . .

. . . . . .

To-night you say you love me:—me,—
  Who leap to love you. Lo,
I am all yours so utterly
  You need not speak, nor show

One sign, but I shall understand
  Out to our life's last rim:
Out into death's uncertain land,
  Gracious be it or grim.

I am all yours . . . And yet to-night
  The old trick haunts me. Look!
I see your face, O new delight,
  As in a picture-book.

Your face, your shape, the fire-lit room,
  The red rose on the shelf,—
And, leaning to its passionate bloom,
  Troubled with love, myself . . .

Oh, hold your hand across my eyes.
  They have no right to see!
But now, as then, they are too wise.
  They stare. They frighten me.

Fannie Stearns Davis.

WE LAUGHED AND PARTED, NEVERMORE TO MEET

We laughed and parted, nevermore to meet
In this fair world of April green and blue.
The whimsical companionship was through,
The gay, light-hearted interlude complete.
Rising from the green bank that was our seat,
Jesting at life, as we were wont to do,
We laughed and parted, nevermore to meet
In this fair world of April green and blue.
Why did I never say how passing sweet
Had been the days that I had spent with you?
I almost thought you felt the impulse too—
The chance was gone, and, rising to our feet,
We laughed and parted, nevermore to meet.

Alfred R. Bellinger.

INTENTIONS

So many things I meant to say
To please, to praise, to make you glad;
Such splendid chances have I had
And yet I let them slip away;
And now in shame I bow my head
For moments lost and words unsaid.

So many deeds I planned to do
To ease the road of your behest,
But while I loitered taking rest
Another hand has aided you;
And now my heart is pricked with pain
For castles reared and wrecked in vain.

So many songs I meant to sing
To spur you on to greater heights,
To cheer you on those lonely nights
When faith is weak and hope takes wing;
But while I tarried with my song
Your struggling soul grew true and strong.

Without my words you reached your goal,
Without my help you won your fight;
Without my song you chose the right
And love and beauty clothe your soul.
To-day my path is rough and long. . . .
I need your words, your deeds, your song!

John Richard Moreland.

I KNOW A QUIET VALE

I know a quiet vale where faint winds blow
The silver poplar-branches all awry,
And ne'er another sound comes drifting by
Save where the stream's cool waters softly flow,
Only wild-roses riot there and throw
Their perfume recklessly, the while on high
Great snowy clouds pillow the smiling sky
And cast frail shadows on the grass below.

All is the same, the summer stillness dreams
In idleness across the sunny leas,
Until for very drowsiness it seems
The wind has gone to sleep within the trees—
Yet we once laughed at what the years might bring,
And now I am alone, remembering.

Thomas S. Jones, Jr.

TIME LINGERS

Ah, many a dream has passed me,
  Or friend has torn my heart;
Time lingers, growing weary,
  But friends and dreams depart.

For dreams too long forgotten—
  For friends forsaken, dead,
There bends a feathery willow
  On many a quiet bed.

Dorothy Dow.

THREE POPLARS

Three poplars paused beside a brook
  Before the autumnal mountain,
Then bowed to me, and undertook
The dance of death and shone and shook
  Like waters in a fountain.

O, high the happy bosom heaves
  When love is in the dancer!
But life falls quiet as the leaves,
And soon the dance of death bereaves
  A lover of his answer.

Lightly a girl had danced away
  Her breath and all her laughter;
A boy went joining her one day;
And a little fellow, at his play,
  Saw them and followed after. . . .

And now three poplars poised and shook
  Like waters in a fountain
And, iridescent, undertook
The dance of death beside a brook
  Between me and the mountain.

Witter Bynner.

SEA LULLABY

The old moon is tarnished
With smoke of the flood,
The dead leaves are varnished
With color like blood,

A treacherous smiler
With teeth white as milk,
A savage beguiler
In sheathings of silk,

The sea creeps to pillage,
She leaps on her prey;
A child of the village
Was murdered to-day.

She came up to meet him
In a smooth golden cloak,
She choked him and beat him
To death, for a joke.

Her bright locks were tangled,
She shouted for joy,
With one hand she strangled
A strong little boy.

Now in silence she lingers
Beside him all night
To wash her long fingers
In silvery light.

Elinor Wylie.

WILLIE PITCHER

He is forgotten now,
And humble dust these thirty years and more,
He whose young eyes and beautiful wide brow
My thoughts alone restore.

Dead, and his kindred dead!
And none remembers in that quiet place
The slender form, the brown and faunlike head,
The gently wistful face.

And yet across the years
I see us roam among the apple-trees,
Telling our tale of boyish hopes and fears
Amid the hurried bees.

When I am all alone
By the eternal beauty of the sea,
Or where the mountain's eastward shade is thrown,
His face comes back to me—

A memory unsought—
A ghost entreating, and I know not why,—
A presence that the restless winds of thought
Acknowledge with a sigh;

Till I am half content
Not any more the loneliness to know
Of him who died so young and innocent,
And ah! so long ago!

George Sterling.

TO A CHILD—TWENTY YEARS HENCE

You shall remember dimly,
  Through mists of far-away,
Her whom, our lips set grimly,
  We carried forth to-day.

But when, in days hereafter,
  Unfolding time shall bring
Knowledge and love and laughter
  And trust and triumphing,—

Then from some face the fairest,
  From some most joyous breast,
Garner what there is rarest
  And happiest and best,—

The youth, the light, the rapture
  Of eager April grace,—
And in that sweetness, capture
  Your mother's far-off face.

And all the mists shall perish
  That have between you moved.
You shall see her you cherish;
  And love, as we have loved.

Arthur Davison Ficke.

IN MEMORIAM

I

I could not write to you when you were dying,
Even to cheer you, of the trivial things
That summer to an idle schoolboy brings;
I could not speak so when I knew you lying
Within death's shadow, bravely death defying;
Nor had I skill to touch more solemn strings.
So I was speechless with the grief that wrings
A spirit impotent, the end descrying.
Boyish I wrote at last, impulsively,
And spoke my sorrow from a loaded heart,
Hoping to lighten you of some small part
Of the dark burden of your misery.
And then you tore my very soul apart
For you, the dying, wrote to comfort me.

II

I could not speak then for I had no skill,
Nor knew the courageous spirit I had lost;
Now I guess darkly what the struggle cost,
When with your splendid strength and dauntless will
You met death face to face and fought until
The body broke. So in autumnal frost
I have seen oaks, their naked branches tossed
Against the heavens on a windy hill.

I cannot think the everlasting rest
And quiet of heaven is a just reward
For your keen spirit tempered like a sword;
Still would you seek to win a distant goal,
Still journey onward in a noble quest.
Strife is the guerdon for so strong a soul.

III

Often the iron of the winding stair
Clattered, as hastily with lusty shout
I mounted to your door, and passed without,
Till to your welcoming cry I entered there,
To ask for comfort in a schoolboy care,
To seek solution of a weighty doubt,
Or joyously to say the buds were out
And spring was coming with the quickened air.
Youth pays no heed to death, nor understands
That the day's happiness will ever change,
Or love and friendship fail; and I, a boy,
Held those dear moments in unfeeling hands,
Scattered and squandered them in thoughtless joy.
How precious are they now, how sad, how strange.

Theodore H. Banks, Jr.

ELEGY

Here shall rest unmoved through the waning seasons
One who knew and dreamed, and forgot in dreaming;
Now alone the trees, who remembered always,
Are his companions.

They to whom he came for their silent healing,
They who ever gave of their ancient patience;
Now alone with them and the night-wind's crooning
Leave him forgotten.

Thomas S. Jones, Jr.

NUSTSCHA

I

Nustscha! If they have left one rock of you
Beside the spring, or where the gray hills rose
Whereon of old I climbed at daytime's close
To watch the twilight birds rise and pursue,
Then there is still one heart I may turn to.
My feet shall follow where my spirit goes,
And scan the footprints of the ancient crows
Who when I left the valley vanished too.
Oh rather would I bruise my naked feet
Pacing your leaden hills, and drink my drink
Out of the marsh beside the shattered dam
Than linger here where one may come to beat
Loud on my door and clamor, and I shrink
To open lest he see how poor I am.

II

We were so tender, and we were so young,
The gayety that boldened in my feet
Was in your rock and grass, and firm and fleet
They bore the morning, an heroic throng.
Over the gardens and the trees I flung
My voice, but you were just as quick to greet
The lightning in the cloud and the great beat
Of thunder on the hilltops lifting strong.

Did not your valley rise and fall with pride
When from an oaken bough one golden dawn
I sang like any bird on any tree
My song of songs? Oh, day went side by side
Over the forest with the new-born sun.
God give me strength to bear the memory.

III

I have forgotten nothing, nothing lost.
The wealth is garnered and the guard is true.
I but unlatch the gate and follow through
The haunts of memory—Oh, what a host!
Oh, lovely and familiar seeming ghost!—
And I am with you, with the whole of you.
Yes, I can count all, I can even woo
One all unnoticed then I now love most.
And who may he be? Him you knew full well.
He lingered longingly the summer o'er,
And in each open blossom saw an elf,
In each closed flower felt the darkness swell,
And from each autumn leaf saw the light pour
Over the earth: a sad, strange lad: myself.

IV

To dream away a Sabbath afternoon
Upon the hillside shadowing the lake
Wherein dim palaces of crystal wake
To view and stay and do not vanish soon;
And while the shadows thicken and the croon
Of weird night-spirits rises, and the break
Of silence is a thing of terror's make,
To stay and wait the coming of the moon.

And then to climb down to the loam below
Where flowers and trees breathe softly lest they mar
The weaving of the universal mood,
And the joy perish and the wonder go;
In this sweet earthly night to be a star,
Oh, this was youth and love and brotherhood.

V

The merchants never liked you when they passed.
They never stopped to gamble at the Inn.
They spurned our thresholds for the lovely sin
They followed ever, and they never cast
Their fortune with you—you the green, the vast;
Here, said they mocking, there's no gold to win,
And so they vanished with their horses' din—
The merchants never liked you till the last.
Ah, but the gypsies when the autumn came,
How they flocked in to rear their homely tent
From which the smoke soon rose familiarly.
You let them rob you even, and your name
To those strange nameless grew a wonderment.
And they stayed long with you and lovingly.

VI

O I must seek you out before I die
To prove my faith in beauty and in love.
For in you love and beauty grew. There strove
Those wondrous pulses with the sea and sky
And won their godhood. Once more I would lie
In the warm sunlight of your river grove
And feel dear unseen passionate fingers move
Over my eyelids closed, caressingly.

Then might the evil yet pass out of me,
And the dark stain of passion leave my soul;
For power and pleasure, wealth and fame, I know,
Are a vexation and a vanity.
All this is true, true love alone makes whole;
Such love as yours, Nustscha, could make me so.

VII

Long ere the soldiers trampled down your grass
The pride of princes was already yours.
It did not need the fret of man and horse
To kindle up your spirit, and the mass
Of moving flesh and steel and rock and brass
Glanced over you like summer dust. The wars
Have only broken you and the remorse
Of death chokes in your ruined mountain-pass.
Then did your morning hilltops lift with pride
When first my fathers fashioned in your fields
The altar unto Him they called Most High.
Oh, their great singing and their mighty stride.
Even your withered heart, remembering yields,
And the grass moves like phantoms rushing by.

. . . . . .

XIX

All vision fades, but splendor does not fail,
Though joy vanish and all her company,
And there be nothing left of it to see.
Splendor is in the grain. This lovely vale
Of rock and tree and pool and sky may pale
And fade some autumn with its greenery,

And its form totter, crumble utterly,
And scatter with some universal gale.
Yet be they spread ever so wide and free
The grain will cause the dream to come again.
And world formations out of mists will rise;
And there will be thoughts of eternity,
And hopes the heart of man will know are vain,
And tears will come, as now, into the eyes. . . .

Samuel Roth.

ONE PATH

Outside the Earthly Paradise,
  Beneath its cool high walls,
I walk the little grass-blurred path
  Where sunlight seldom falls.

I try no more the guarded gates
  That will not let me in;
I cease to wonder what the cause,
  What accident, what sin.

I walk the lonely path that's mine,
  My heart and I employ
Our solitude in songs about
  The near-by Kingdom's joy.

And once, while singing thus, we heard
  Applause and friendly cries,
And saw, high up, our happy kin,
  Love in their lovely eyes.

The path of lonely wayfaring
  Ends where I cannot tell:
Outside the Earthly Paradise
  I know—but that is well.

William Alexander Percy.

THE RIVER

I came from the sunless valleys,
  And sought for the open sea,
For I thought in its gray expanses
  My peace would come to me.

I came at last to the ocean,
  And found it wild and black,
And I cried to the windless valleys,
  "Be kind and take me back!"

But the thirsty tide ran inland,
  And the salt waves drank of me,
And I who was fresh as the rainfall
  Am bitter as the sea.

Sara Teasdale.

THE CHANGELING

I met a threadbare waif below the town.
His eyes were sad, and from his dusty coat
Roses no longer crimson drooped and fell;
Pebbles which had been kisses bound his throat.

He held a cup and listlessly drank wine,
As one who knew not what he was drinking of.
And when I asked his name he answered low:
"My name is Habit—once they called me Love."

Agnes Lee.

THREE GIRLS

Three school girls pass this way each day.
Two of them go in the fluttery way
Of girls, with all that girlhood buys;
But one goes with a dream in her eyes.

Two of them have the eyes of girls
Whose hair is learning scorn of curls,
But the eyes of one are like wide doors
Opening out on misted shores.

And they will go as they go to-day
On to the end of life's short way;
Two will have what living buys,
And one will have the dream in her eyes.

Two will die as many must,
And fitly dust will welcome dust;
But dust has nothing to do with one—
She dies as soon as her dream is done.

Hazel Hall.

FROM A STREET CORNER

Like snails I see the people go
Along the pavement, row on row;
And each one on his shoulder bears
His coiling shell of petty cares—
The spiral of his own affairs.

Some peer about, some creep on blind,
But not one leaves his shell behind.
And I, who think I see so well,
Peer at the rest, but cannot tell
How much is cut off by my shell.

Eleanor Hammond.

RICHARD CORY

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him;
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich,—yes, richer than a king,—
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Edwin Arlington Robinson.

SHE WALKS SERENE

She walks serene, so calm and unafraid,
Her head held high, her vision straining through
The clouds which seem to hang 'twixt her and you.
New hope is in her light elastic tread,
Her soul shines through her eyes as if it fed
On heavenly food, sweet manna wet with dew,
Which morning's rosy dawn brings fresh and new.
And ever and again her feet are led
By devious ways and steep, where stumbling souls
Less strong must fall and all unheeded lie;
And I who know that through the bitter night
Her broken heart is torn, her spirit rolls
And mourns in grief because you are not nigh,
I bow my head before her glorious fight.

Virginia Taylor McCormick.

COURAGE

Because my joy is less than joy,
  My sorrow more than pain,
I mock the grief that begs for tears
  With laughter and disdain.

I hold the sunlight in my hands
  And hurl it to destroy,
Because my pain is more than pain,
  My laughter less than joy.

When I was young with happiness
  I played at being sad,
The tears I used to mock my joy
  Were all the grief I had.

I do not play at sorrow now,
  Nor shall I weep again—
But I shall smile with less than joy,
  And laugh with more than pain.

Helen Frazee-Bower.

DREAMERS

Is it a dream that we are different?
Can it be true we are the same as they—
Those beasts forever tearing at their prey,
Seeming so sleek yet always on the scent?
Our talons hide in pale pear blossom flesh,
Cold cunning lurks beneath our fragile skin,
Oh we are strange and terrible within—
Our slender hands can lay a snaring mesh!
Still, do beasts hold hushed visions as they go,
By toiling sweat do they stretch towers high—
Aching to wring a solace from the sky,
And crying of a High White Thing they know!
Are we mere beasts and cruel as we seem,
Or are we different because we dream?

Power Dalton.

THE NIGHT ARMIES

The street is gray with rain,
  The gutters run surcharged. All night
I heard war-chariots sweep the plain
  In one long-rolling wave of fight.

Now it is dawn, and I can see
  No battle wreck, no littered plain:
Where do wild night-armies flee?—
  The street is gray with rain.

And down the street an ash-cart jolts
  Ponderous, and I turn away . . .
God, how the ghost in man revolts
  Against the day!

Lee Wilson Dodd.

BALLAD OF THE DEAD KING

The dead King lay in his stately hall;
The guard paced slow, paced slow;
The stars shone in at the shuttered port,
The candles fluttered low.

Sore wearied was the sleeping King,
With all his kingdom's care.
His face was like a winter's day—
The snow was in his hair.

The candles threw a broken light
About his resting-place,
And all the stillnesses of earth
Were gathered in his face.

It seemed he came a distant way
Through harsh, unfriendly lands,
And laid his labor at God's feet,
And slept with folded hands.

. . . . . .

Across the wall where life began
Men stopped and praised the King;
And Some One hauled the banners down,
And made the bells to ring.

And Some One said the King was good,
  And Some One wept aloud,
And Some One labored night and day
  To make the King his shroud.

But little Carl, the weaver's son,
  Who played beneath the wall,
He laughed, as only childhood laughs,
  And tossed his bright new ball.

"He gave me this, the tall, gray man,"
  Thus Seven-Summers sang;
And still they hauled the banners down,
  And still the dull bells rang.

"He stopped as he went riding by,
  And bought my ball for me."
The childish laughter shrilled and died,
  The bells tolled ceaselessly.

. . . . . .

The dead King lay in the Halls of State,
  The guard paced slow, paced slow;
The dawn came in at the shuttered port,
  And the candles flickered low.

Sore wearied was the sleeping King
  With all his kingdom's care,
His face was like a winter's day—
  The snow was in his hair.

They bore him down at break o' day
  And laid him in his place;
And all the stillness of the tomb
  Was gathered in his face.

They sang his name in chanted psalms,
  They praised him, being dead;
Their grief was like a wind of tears—
  "He was the King!" they said.

Then high above the sobbing wind
  All suddenly there came
The tribute of the Secret Deed
  That had no thought of fame.

Shrill, shrill it rose above the crowd,
  The fairest praise of all—
The laughter of a little child
  Who played beneath the wall.

Dana Burnet.

SUCCESS

He who would rear a palace for his pride
Oft feasted in its halls, though none remain.
Who dreamed to lift to God a perfect fane
Sculptured one deathless pillar ere he died.

Katherine Lee Bates.

HOW SWIFTLY THE BRIGHT COINS OF THOUGHT

How swiftly the bright coins of thought
Come from the busy mint, the brain,
To markets where our lives are bought—
The sense's ease, the spirit's pain.
And one will save, and one will spend,
And one, on meeting with a friend,
Some lesser coin will toss and spin
For chance of what its fall may win.

So I have tossed and spun, and held
The bright coin in my hand, to read
Whether it was a song it spelled
Or those dark fears that sorrows breed.
The elder gods all played at chance—
Thus came adventure and romance.
Our lives are shillings, like as not,
The gods have spun—and then forgot.

Amory Hare.

THE KINGS ARE PASSING DEATHWARD

The kings are passing deathward in the dark
  Of days that had been splendid where they went;
Their crowns are captive and their courts are stark
  Of purples that are ruinous, now, and rent.
For all that they have seen disastrous things:
  The shattered pomp, the split and shaken throne,
They cannot quite forget the way of Kings:
  Gravely they pass, majestic and alone.

With thunder on their brows, their faces set
  Toward the eternal night of restless shapes,
They walk in awful splendor, regal yet,
  Wearing their crimes like rich and kingly capes . . .
Curse them or taunt, they will not hear or see;
The Kings are passing deathward: let them be.

David Morton.

THE NIGHT OF GODS

Their mouths have drunken Death's eternal wine—
The draught that Baal in oblivion sips.
Unseen about their courts the adder slips,
Unheard the sucklings of the leopard whine;
The toad has found a resting-place divine,
And bloats in stupor between Ammon's lips.
O Carthage and the unreturning ships,
The falling pinnacle, the shifting Sign!

Lo! when I hear from voiceless court and fane
Time's adoration of Eternity—
The cry of kingdoms past and gods undone—
I stand as one whose feet at noontide gain
A lonely shore; who feels his soul set free,
And hears the blind sea chanting to the sun.

George Sterling.

NAPOLEON IN HADES

They stirred uneasily, drew down their capes,
And whispered each to each in awed surprise,
Seeing this figure brood along the shapes,
World tragedies thick-crowding through his eyes.
On either side the ghostly groups drew back
In huddled knots, yielding him way and room,
Their foolish mouths agape and fallen slack,
Their bloodless fingers pointing through the gloom.

Still lonely and magnificent in guilt,
Splendid in scorn, wrapt in a cloudy dream,
He paused at last upon the Stygian silt,
And raised calm eyes above the angry stream . . .
Hand in his breast, he stood till Charon came,
While Hades hummed with gossip of his name.

David Morton.

ULYSSES

Whole days he sits and muses by the fire,
With a full flagon and an ancient hound
Twitching in sleep beside his chair; no sound
Rouses the weary eyes, the hands that tire,
But when at even Telemachus and men
Come thundering from the hunt, with noise of spears,
And shields that ring upon the court, he hears,
Takes up his sword, and is himself again.

Long afternoons he paces by the shore,
And fights anew old wars and old regrets;
And where the humble fisher mends his nets,
He sees the heroes that he loved of yore.
Waiting, he stands to hail in the dim light
One proud ship more, and sail out in the night.

Beulah May.

SONNET

(From "The Middle Years")

This is the burden of the middle years:
To know what things can be, or not be, known;
To find no sunset lovely unto tears;
To pass not with the swallow southward-flown
Toward far Hesperides where gold seas break
Beyond the last horizon round strange isles;
To have forgot Prometheus on his peak;
To know that pilgrim-miles are only miles.
Then death seems not so dreadful with its night
That keeps unstirred a veil of mystery.
Then no acclaimed disaster can affright
Him who is wise in human history
And finds no godhead there to earn his praise
And dreads no horror save his empty days.

Arthur Davison Ficke.

THE UNKNOWN GREAT

Not to the brave upon the battlefield
Alone, the palms of victory belong,
Not only to the great of earth the song
Of praise and pæan should the singer yield.
Greater the souls who, single-handed, wield
The battle-axe against the hosts of wrong,
Unknown, unnoted in life's reckless throng,
And only in God's day to stand revealed.

Ah, by our side, in patient, humble guise,
How many walk the silent conqueror's way!—
As fixëd stars in fame's eternal skies
Their stainless luster worthiest to shine.
Unlaureled heroes! reverently I lay
Low at your feet this tribute leaf of mine.

Ina Coolbrith.

THE SINGER OF ONE SONG

He sang one song and died—no more but that:
A single song and carelessly complete.
He would not bind and thresh his chance-grown
wheat,
Nor bring his wild fruit to the common vat,
To store the acid rinsings, thin and flat,
Squeezed from the press or trodden under feet.
A few slow beads, blood-red and honey-sweet,
Oozed from the grape, which burst and spilled its
fat.

But Time, who soonest drops the heaviest things
That weigh his pack, will carry diamonds long.
So through the poet's orchestra, which weaves
One music from a thousand stops and strings,
Pierces the note of that immortal song:—
"High over all the lonely bugle grieves."

Henry A. Beers.

POETS

Heralds of joy, they walk the path of sorrow;
Bearers of light, they tread a darkened way;
Of gold bereft, from heaven's wealth they borrow;
They die in night whose souls are full of day.

Thomas Curtis Clark.

TO SONG

Here shall remain all tears for lovely things
And here enshrined the longing of great hearts,
Caught on a lyre whence waking wonder starts,
To mount afar upon immortal wings;
Here shall be treasured tender wonderings,
The faintest whisper that the soul imparts,
All silent secrets and all gracious arts
Where nature murmurs of her hidden springs.

O magic of a song! here loveliness
May sleep unhindered of life's mortal toll,
And noble things stand towering o'er the tide;
Here mid the years, untouched by time or stress,
Shall sweep on every wind that stirs the soul
The music of a voice that never died!

Thomas S. Jones, Jr.

MIRACLE

Who is in love with loveliness,
  Need not shake with cold;
For he may tear a star in two,
  And frock himself in gold.

Who holds her first within his heart,
  In certain favor goes;
If his roof tumbles, he may find
  Harbor in a rose.

Lizette Woodworth Reese.

THEY WENT FORTH TO BATTLE, BUT THEY ALWAYS FELL

They went forth to battle, but they always fell;
Their eyes were fixed above the sullen shields;
Nobly they fought and bravely, but not well,
And sank heart-wounded by a subtle spell.
They knew not fear that to the foeman yields,
They were not weak, as one who vainly wields
A futile weapon; yet the sad scrolls tell
How on the hard-fought field they always fell.

It was a secret music that they heard,
A sad sweet plea for pity and for peace;
And that which pierced the heart was but a word,
Though the white breast was red-lipped where the sword
Pressed a fierce cruel kiss, to put surcease
On its hot thirst, but drank a hot increase.
Ah, they by some strange troubling doubt were stirred,
And died for hearing what no foeman heard.

They went forth to battle, but they always fell;
Their might was not the might of lifted spears;
Over the battle-clamor came a spell
Of troubling music, and they fought not well.
Their wreaths are willows, and their tribute, tears;
Their names are old sad stories in men's ears;
Yet they will scatter the red hordes of Hell,
Who went to battle forth and always fell.

Shaemas O'Sheel.

They pushed their glowing joys aside,
  They laid their shining hopes away;
They hearkened, pale and starry-eyed,
  And closed the books and dropped the play.
They said, "There is a greater thing
Than fame or golden harvesting.
Out of the storm there came a cry
And we will answer, though we die!"

They answered from the seething plain,
They answered from the reeling height,
To the last reaching-forth, in pain,
They sent their answer down the night:
  "Though hope allure and love enthrall
    And precious, youth and glory seem,
  Sweeter than all, greater than all
    Is to give all to a dream!"

They will not come again to play
The old games through the summer day,
Or seek the cool woods or the brooks
Or open now the dusty books.
Yet, where in crowds, with restless feet,
The getters and the spenders meet,

There is, at times, a strange deep sound
Not from the sky, not from the ground,
And voices such as music hath
That shakes the heart and chokes the breath:
"Though hope allure and love enthrall
And precious, youth and glory seem,
Sweeter than all, greater than all
Is to give all to a dream!"

On its old orbit swings this earth;
Day comes, night comes; the seasons pass;
And holy memories, amid mirth,
Are but as shadows on a glass.
Men may forget and Time erase
Of name and deed the last faint trace;
But in still hours, amid their joys
Unborn, undreamed of girls and boys
Shall of a sudden be aware
Of something not of earth or air,
A burning brow, a glowing eye,
A flame, a presence and a cry:
"Though hope allure and love enthrall
And precious, youth and glory seem,
Sweeter than all, greater than all
Is to give all to a dream!"

Hermann Hagedorn.

SHELLEY

Knight-Errant of the Never-ending Quest,
And minstrel of the Unfulfilled Desire;
Forever tuning thy frail earthly lyre
To some unearthly music, and possessed
With painful passionate longing to invest
The golden dream of Love's immortal fire
With mortal robes of beautiful attire,
And fold perfection to thy throbbing breast!
What wonder, Shelley, that the restless wave
Should claim thee and the leaping flame consume
Thy drifted form on Viareggio's beach?
These were thine elements,—thy fitting grave.
But still thy soul rides on with fiery plume,
Thy wild song rings in ocean's yearning speech!

Henry van Dyke.

Who is this, of all our voices hushed beyond the
singing shore,
Where the foamless roll of silence cradles peace for-
evermore,
Who is this, that still returning, mourns his eerie
dream of Aden,
And his mystic, bloodless music chants the spell
of lost Lenore?

Was thy singing ever mortal, warmed by human,
fierce desires,
Ere the living passion flickered into pale, sepul-
chral fires?
Or was life to thee but shadow,—song to thee but
friendless yearning,
Thy first home the spirit vision whither still thy
heart aspires?

O thy high and pallid singing, fugitive from baf-
fled death,
Surely moves from phantom lips, and pulses with
unearthly breath!
Not of earth thou wert, dead singer,—thee hath
also death rejected?
Hath nor death nor life its laurel for thy song's
ethereal wreath?

Changeling of the Muses, bearing mortal exile all thy days,
Rapt from starry heights of faery to endure earth's heavy ways,
Alien from what land, and pilgrim to what shrine—here lost and lonely?
Even praise of thee will falter; scarce we know the man we praise.

Lost indeed and hither fallen, as the proud light-bearer fell,
Out of harmonies eternal, out of peace ineffable,
Into discord, into darkness, into bitterness infernal,—
For to wear our wingless vesture, for a soul like thine was hell.

Shadow-lover, building twilight-worlds of swift-enfolding doom,
Where the haunted soul is mirrored in its own demonic gloom,
Yet from utter darkness kindling still the tragic flame of beauty,
Till from death, from hate, from horror streams its melancholy bloom;

Dreamer of the dauntless will, that darkened soars to perfect sight,
Dauntless, though this muddy garment weigh its wings and dull its flight,
Up from lesser gloom to lesser gloom a finer ether winning,
Till the thought escape the body into skies of cloudless light;

Shall we call thee lost, dead poet,—we whose fate
is kin to thine?
Shadows are our world, and phantom half the stars
that o'er us shine;
Shall we call him lost, who faithful toward the
light of beauty beacons,
And our days his mystic singing floods with loveli-
ness divine?

John Erskine.

THE GARDEN OF SORROW

(Suggested by Poe Cottage, Fordham)

A mist broods over all—I gaze with love
And lingering sadness on a place I know
Too well for words; the little house where Poe
Suffered and sang. Oh, happy sky above,
Bend with a little greyness! Glad World, move
Less lightly! Here dwelt one whom darkest woe
Wrapped in unending night, and doomed to go
Where the gaunt raven rends the stricken dove.

But I alone am sad. The clean, cool skies
Are fresh with tranquil gladness . . . Vagrant flowers
Dance in the wind . . . Children at play give cries
Of joy. Ah well! perchance he, too, had hours
When Spring and childhood raised his burdened eyes
And blue skies brightened melancholy bowers.

Hugh Wilgus Ramsaur.

SHAKESPEARE

Because, the singer of an age, he sang
  The passions of the ages,
It was humanity itself that leaped
  To life upon his pages.

He told no single being's tale—he forced
  All beings to his pen.
And when he made a man to walk the street
  Forth walked a million men.

Agnes Lee.

THE SKULL OF SHAKESPEARE

Within how small, without how strangely vast!
What stars of terror had their path in thee!
What music of the heavens and the sea
Lived in a sigh or thundered in the blast!
Here swept the gleam and pageant of the Past,
As beauty trembled to her fate's decree;
Here swords were forged for armies yet to be,
And tears were found too dreadful not to last.

Here stood the seats of judgment and its light,
To whose assizes all our dreams were led—
Our best and worst, our Paradise and Hell;
And in this room delivered now to night,
The mortal put its question to the dead,
And worlds were weighed, and God's deep shadow fell.

George Sterling.

PERSEPHONE

The hour draweth near
When thou, Persephone, shalt reappear
From the mysterious realms of the dear dead
By vanished joy, lost beauty, tenanted.
The robins sing to call thee from the ground,
The maples' ruddy tresses are unbound,
The ice-locked rivers melt and gladly run
Like happy children laughing in the sun.

O bright, illusive maid,
In the dim regions where thou wast betrayed,
Tell me if thou hast met a lady dear,
Grown weary of the lengthening shadows here?
She wore a little bonnet, silk and lace,
With roses round the circle of her face,
And hearts awoke to joy where'er she trod
Because her life expressed the love of God.

I do forget! To thee
She went arrayed in regal panoply.
No little bonnet set with roses sweet,
But dressed as for her king, from head to feet
All stately grace, bedecked with lilies, fair

And white as was her hair.
Oh, she was very, very dear to me!
Pray has thou seen her there, Persephone?
This is the happy season of her birth.
With thy return to earth,
Canst thou not lead her gently by the hand
Back to the sunshine of her native land?—
Thou who dost in thy verdant mantle bring
The myriad flowers of immortal spring.
Dearer than any flowers beneath the skies,
The tenderness within her loving eyes.

Persephone, why tread
Through the vast, ageless regions of the dead,
Bringing the bloom of flower, the song of bird,
But from the vanished lips no loving word?
Their vaunted power the gods have lost; I know
Where they have journeyed, they we sorrow so;—
Beyond the reach of thee or thy caress,
Beyond thy jocund smile of tenderness,
Beyond thy power to woo or to retrieve,
Deep in a heart of love they would not leave.

Blithe goddess of the spring,
Persephone, we hear thy robins sing
In the long twilights that she loved to see,
When her exuberant spirit watched for thee.
Thou wilt not find her in thy somber land,
Whose outward-leading paths none understand.
Bring back thy daffodil and violet;
Upon the heavenly heights her feet are set.
Thy shadow-silences the soul must dare,
To gain the sunlight of that world more fair.

Persephone, return,
Bearing to man thine overbrimming urn;
And walk our earth as for uncounted years,
Leading coy April, clad in smiles and tears;
Woo from the underworld the laggard spring.

Our dead thou canst not bring.
My lady sees the asphodel; the rose
Of souls grown sanctified and blest she knows.
Beyond the shadow-realm the dear home-land
Waits in the loving hollow of God's hand.
She has gone far beyond thy call and cry,
Where stretch the mystic pastures of the sky,
And thou, Persephone, hast grown more fair
Because she passed thy gate in journeying there.

Edith Willis Linn.

HELEN IN HADES

All that I sought was peace and happiness,
But there was something fatal in my eyes
And maddening in my mouth; Men grew unwise
And crazed, beholding me, and Law was less
Than their desire; one vagrant, windy tress,
Or my unguarded bosom's rich surprise
Filled each man's heart with visions and vain cries
And his arms rose in dreams for my caress.

Yea, I saw neither happiness nor peace
But hungry faces bright as swords and spears;
I was the White, Unwilling Storm of Greece;
Tumult tossed round me, rising with the years . . .
What was that pale boy's name the gossips set
By mine? . . . we dead so easily forget!

Harry Kemp.

THERMOPYLÆ

Men lied to them and so they went to die.
Some fell, unknowing that they were deceived,
And some escaped, and bitterly bereaved,
Beheld the truth they loved shrink to a lie.
And those there were that never had believed,
But from afar had read the gathering sky,
And darkly wrapt in that dread prophecy,
Died trusting that their truth might be retrieved.

It matters not. For life deals thus with Man;
To die alone deceived or with the mass,
Or disillusioned to complete his span.
Thermopylæ or Golgotha, all one,
The young dead legions in the narrow pass;
The stark black cross against the setting sun.

Robert Hillyer.

The moon, a sweeping scimitar, dipped in the
stormy straits;
The dawn, a crimson cataract, burst through the
eastern gates,
The cliffs were robed in scarlet, the sands were
cinnibar,
Where first two men spread wings for flight and
dared the hawk afar.

There stands the cunning workman, the craftiest
past all praise,
The man who chained the Minotaur, the man who
built the Maze;
His young son is beside him, and the boy's face is
a light,
A light of dawn and wonder and of valor infinite.

Their great vans beat the cloven air, like eagles
they mount up,
Motes in the wine of morning, specks in a crystal
cup,
And lest his wings should melt apace, old Dædalus
flies low,
But Icarus beats up, beats up—he goes where light-
nings go.

He cares no more for warnings, he rushes through
the sky,
Braving the crags of ether, daring the gods on high,
Black 'gainst the crimson sunset, golden o'er cloudy
snows,
With all Adventure in his heart, the first winged
man arose.

Dropping gold, dropping gold, where the mists of
morning rolled,
On he kept his way undaunted, though his breaths
were stabs of cold,
Through the mystery of dawning that no mortal
may behold.

Now he shouts, now he sings in the rapture of his
wings,
And his great heart burns intenser with the strength
of his desire,
As he circles like a swallow, wheeling, flaming, gyre
on gyre.

Gazing straight at the sun, half his pilgrimage is
done,
And he staggers for a moment, hurries on, reels
backward, swerves
In a rain of scattered feathers, as he falls in broken
curves!

Icarus, Icarus, though the end is piteous,
Yet forever, yea, forever, we shall see thee rising
thus,
See the first supernal glory, not the ruin hideous.

You were man; you who ran farther than our eyes
can scan,
Man, absurd, gigantic, eager for impossible ro-
mance,
Overthrowing all Hell's legions with one warped and
broken lance!

On the highest steeps of space he will have his
dwelling place;
In those far, terrific regions where the cold comes
down like Death
Gleams the red glint of his pinions, smoke, the
vapor of his breath.
Floating downward very clear, still the echoes reach
the ear
Of a little tune he whistles and a little song he
sings,
Mounting, mounting still, triumphant, on his torn
and broken wings!

Stephen Vincent Benét.

THE SCHOOL BOY READS HIS ILIAD

The sounding battles leave him nodding still:
  The din of javelins at the distant wall
Is far too faint to wake that weary will
  That all but sleeps for cities where they fall.
He cares not if this Helen's face were fair,
  Nor if the thousand ships shall go or stay;
In vain the rumbling chariots throng the air
  With sounds the centuries shall not hush away.

Beyond the window where the Spring is new,
  Are marbles in a square, and tops again,
And floating voices tell him what they do,
  Luring his thought from these long-warring men,—
And though the camp be visited with gods,
He dreams of marbles and of tops, and nods.

David Morton.

WHAT IF THE LAPSE OF AGES WERE A DREAM?

What if the lapse of ages were a dream,
From which we waked, clutching the primal bough,
Seeing familiar thunder-piercing crags,
Vast dripping woods, and saurian-bellowed swamps,
That wearied the new heavens with their noise,
Wild seas, that maddened, foaming, ever gnawed
At fog-wrapped cliffs, and roaring in defeat,
Ran to eye-wearying distance, without shore—
All things familiar; but our dull ape minds
Troubled with visions vague; the hungry roar
Of the great sabred tiger far below
Seeming in our wild dream the thund'rous sound
Of hurtling heated monsters, made of steel;
And the God-scattered worlds that gem the sky
Seeming in vision dread the blinding glare
Of myriad windows in huge range on range
Of mountain buildings, teeming o'er with life.
The wallowing pleiosaurus' gurgling snort
Changed in our dream to rhythmic, panting roar
Of black, insensate steel amphibians,
Daring the ocean's dread horizon line;
And the high flap of pterodactyl wings
Making us whine with fear, for, in our dream,
We saw vast lifeless birds, that roaring flew,
Commanded by weak puny likenesses
Of our ape-selves; we cringed with terrors vague
Of ungrasped thoughts we could not understand—
What if the lapse of ages were a dream?

Stephen Moylan Bird.

TO AN INHABITANT OF PARADISE

How goes it in your star-lit world—
The silences, the brooding wood?
Does there the tiger hunt no more,
The falcon twitter for his hood?

Have you stripped all the boughs that talk
And calmed the torrents from the hill?
Are lamb and wolf now reconciled?
Is hunger banished from your sill?

Does that inexorable whip,
Which drove us heedless face to face,
No longer burn along your veins
Or cut your new dispassionate grace?

Do you watch struggle unconcerned,
Hear voices call you and not speak,
There in your timeless acres feel
Above your kinship with the weak?

Oh, guard the gates that shut you in!
Make sure the world behind your eyes!
My world of men and lust and wheels
Begins to march on Paradise.

Scudder Middleton.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT

In Springfield, Illinois

It is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight in our little town,
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old court-house pacing up and down.

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards,
He lingers where his children used to play;
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones,
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed lank man! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl,
Make his the quaint great figure that men love,
The prairie lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
He is among us—as in times before!
And we who toss and lie awake for long
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings.
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?
Too many peasants fight, they know not why;
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn
Shall come—the shining hope of Europe free:
The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,
That all his hours of travail here for men
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace
That he may sleep upon his hill again?

Vachel Lindsay.

NOVEMBER 11, 1918

Suddenly bells and flags!
  Suddenly—door to door—
Tidings! Can we believe,
  We, who were used to war?

Yet we have dreamed of Peace,
  Knowing her light must be,
Knowing that she must come.
  Look—she comes, it is she!

Tattered her raiment floats,
  Blood is upon her wings.
Ah, but her eyes are clear!
  Ah, but her glad heart sings!

Soon where the shrapnel fell
  Petals will wake and stir.
Look—she is here, she lives!
  Beauty has died for her.

Agnes Lee.

THE CHASM

There is a chasm in the world, more dark
Than any carved of rivers and slow Time,
A murky horror in a frosty clime,
Where no sun peers, no pale moon's virgin arc.
There Shame and Fear, twin wolves, forever bark,
Huddling their stolen herd in night and grime,
Forsaken culprits guilty of no crime,
Gnawed, harried, crushed, heart-stricken, hopeless,
stark.

Forever moaning Why? forever Why?
The lost ones err about the gloomy damps,
Too poor, too rich, too young, too frail to blame,
They live obscurely and obscurely die,
For these are they who have burned out their lamps
Ere yet they knew what meant the golden flame.

Hermann Hagedorn.

CITY FERRY

(Chant of the Weary Workers)

A-drift . . . Let us drift this night, let us drift on the river,
Herded and huddled. Our boat drifts on and on.
The dim far lights of the city shiver.
Dim in our hearts the lost lights quiver.
We are leaden and weary and wan.

Let us drift . . . let us drift, let us drift, let us drift forever.
A fog's in the air . . . The river is white and still.
They are gleams, they are dreams, the ships that are faintly passing;
They are gleams, they are dreams, that the river is softly glassing . . .
O city, have pity this night! All day we have bent to your will!

Is it thy breath, O Death, that has touched the city?
That has made that hard face soft, and those hard eyes kind?
Is it Death that has brought and taught to our master pity?

Is it thy white breath, O Death, in the heart of the
city,
And is it a corpse and a phantom we leave behind?

Is it Death? . . . Let us drift. We are weary, too
weary for weeping;
Too weary to labor, to love, too weary to roam.
The waters, the air and the sky, they are sleeping,
sleeping.
Let us drift. . . . On the air a silence like sorrow
is creeping.
We are weary of going to work. O God! We are
weary of going home!

Edward H. Pfeiffer.

I FOUND A BEGGAR STARVING

I found a beggar starving
  In the windy street one night;
A crescent moon swung overhead
  And the houses twinkled bright.

A music fluttered to the moon,
  The houses seemed to sway;
I heard the whirl of dancing feet
  And laughter of the gay.

I found a beggar starving,
  He was a guest—he said,
But from the feast rose pallid
  Like the faint moon overhead.

"Your eyes"—I said, "stare madly,
  Your lips with cold are mute;
How can it be you hunger
  In the street of wine and fruit?"

The beggar spoke—"You wonder
  I starve with meat and drink,
While goodly bowls are steaming
  And brimming glasses clink.

Gold cannot feed my visions
  Nor quench my thirst of dreams,
For I am one of millions
  Who starve where living teems.

A star is rich with fire,
  How lone it crawls above—
Just like a beggar starving
  Who hungers after love!"

Morris Abel Beer.

AN AUGUST NIGHT IN THE CITY

I know a sad park where, on breathless nights,
Throng those whom through the day the hot sun smites—
The pallid poor, unlettered and alone,
Whose hearts are hotter than the aching stone.

This is their dormitory; here they fare
After the Summer noon's relentless glare.
See! here they crowd like sheep without a fold,
While all around them rings the city's gold.

But there are coasts beside a lonely sea,
And hills and glens and many a wind-swept lea
Where man has never broken the silence deep. . .
Yet here to-night an army falls asleep!

Charles Hanson Towne.

THE WALL STREET PIT

I see a hell of faces surge and whirl,
Like maelstrom in the ocean—faces lean
And fleshless as the talons of a hawk—
Hot faces like the faces of the wolves
That track the traveler fleeing through the night—
Grim faces shrunken up and fallen in,
Deep-plowed like weather-eaten bark of oak—
Drawn faces like the faces of the dead,
Grown suddenly old upon the brink of earth.

Is this a whirl of madmen ravening,
And blowing bubbles in their merriment?
Is Babel come again with shrieking crew
To eat the dust and drink the roaring wind?
And all for what? A handful of bright sand
To buy a shroud with and a length of earth?

Edwin Markham.

FIFTEEN

(To a Face on Fifth Avenue)

How close must be the city air
  To make your young head droop so soon,
Ere ever May's wild-flying hair
  Yield to the silken bonds of June!

Faded! Before the bloom, the blight!
  Unshamed, but faded! Where are now
Those tremulous glories that made bright
  That powdered cheek and brow?

Oh, cheek that flamed, oh, sparkling eyes!
  Was it for this, that perfect mirth?
For this the love, the sacrifice,
  The patience, and the pangs of birth?

Faded! And now the long decay;
  Years, and the hungering look behind.
November on the heels of May!
  A crumpled leaf, the whirling wind!

Hermann Hagedorn.

LILACS IN THE CITY

Amid the rush and fever of the street,
  The snarl and clash of countless quarreling bells,
And the sick, heavy heat,
  The hissing footsteps, and the hateful smells,
I found you, speaking quietly
  Of sunlit hill-horizons and clean earth;
  While the pale multitude that may not dare
To pause and live a moment, lest they die,
  Swarmed onward with hot eyes, and left you there—
An armful of God's glory, nothing worth.

You are more beautiful than I can know.
  Even one loving you might gaze an hour
Nor learn the perfect flow
  Of line and tint in one small, perfect flower.
There are no two of you the same,
And every one is wonderful and new—
  Poor baby-blossoms that have died unblown,
  And you that droop yourselves as if for shame,
You are too perfect. I had hardly known
  The grace of your glad sisters but for you.

You myriads of little litanies!
  Not as our bitter piety, subdued

To cold creed that denies
  Or lying law that severs glad and good;
But like a child's eyes, after sleep
  Uplifted; like a girl's first wordless prayer
  Close-held by him who loves her—no distress
Nor storm of supplication, but a deep,
  Dear heartache of such utter happiness
As only utter purity can bear.

For you are all the robin feels at dawn;
  The meaning of green dimness, and calm noons
On high fields far withdrawn,
  Where the haze glimmers and the wild bee croons.
You are the soul of a June night:—
  Intimate joy of moon-swept vale and glade,
Warm fragrance breathing upward from the ground,
  And eager winds tremulous with sharp delight
Till all the tense-tuned gloom thrills like a sound—
  Mystery of sweet passion unafraid.

O sweet, sweet, sweet! You are the proof of all
  That over-truth our dreams have memory of
That day cannot recall:
  Work without weariness, and tearless love,
And taintless laughter. While we run
To measure dust, and sounding names are hurled
  Into the nothingness of days unborn,
You hold your little hearts up to the sun,
  Quietly beautiful amid our scorn—
God's answer to the wisdom of this world.

Brian Hooker.

DAFFODILS

Fathered by March, the daffodils are here.
First, all the air grew keen with yesterday,
And once a thrush from out some hollow gray
On a field's edge, where whitening stalks made cheer,
Fluted the last unto the budding year;
Now, that the wind lets loose from orchard spray
Plum bloom and peach bloom down the dripping way,
Their punctual gold through the wet blades they rear.
Oh, fleet and sweet! A light to all that pass
Below, in the cramped yard, close to the street,
Long-stemmed one flames behind the palings bare,
The whole of April in a tuft of grass.
Scarce here, soon will it be—oh, sweet and fleet!—
Gone like a snatch of song upon the stair.

Lizette Woodworth Reese.

WASTED HOURS

There was a day I wasted long ago,
  Lying upon a hillside in the sun—
An April day of wind and drifting clouds,
  An idle day and all my work undone.

The little peach trees with their coral skirts
  Were dancing up the hillside in the breeze;
The grey walled meadows gleamed like bits of jade
  Against the crimson bloom of maple trees.

And I could smell the warmth of trodden grass,
  The coolness of a freshly harrowed field;
And I could hear a bluebird's wistful song
  Of love and beauty only half revealed.

I have forgotten many April days
  But one there is that comes to haunt me still—
A day of feathered trees and windy skies
  And wasted hours on a sunlit hill.

Medora Addison.

CANTICLE

Devoutly worshipping the oak,
  Wherein the barred owl stares,
The little feathered forest folk
  Are praying sleepy prayers.

Praying the summer to be long
  And drowsy to the end,
And daily full of sun and song,
  That broken hopes may mend.

Praying the golden age to stay
  Until the whip-poor-will
Appoints a windy moving day,
  And hurries from the hill.

William Griffith.

A TULIP GARDEN

Guarded within the old red wall's embrace,
Marshalled like soldiers in gay company,
The tulips stand arrayed. Here infantry
Wheels out into the sunlight. What bold grace
Sets off their tunics, white, with crimson lace!
Here are platoons of gold-frocked cavalry,
With scarlet sabres tossing in the eye
Of purple batteries, every gun in place.
Forward they come, with flaunting colors spread,
With torches burning, stepping out in time
To some quick, unheard march. Our ears are dead,
We cannot catch the tune. In pantomime
Parades that army. With our utmost powers
We hear the wind stream through a bed of flowers.

Amy Lowell.

FUGITIVE

Behind these falling curtains of the rain,
  Beauty goes by, a phantom on the hill,
A timid fugitive beyond the lane,
  In rainy silver,—and so shy and still
That only peering eyes of some hid bird,
  Or furry ears that listened by a stone,
Could guess at Something neither seen nor heard,
  Finding escape, and faring by, alone.

For eyes like ours, too faint a thing and fleet,
  Too lightly running for such ears to hear
The stealthy going of those weightless feet;
  No thrilling sight or sound of her comes near,
Only the shining grasses where they lie,
Give hint of silver slippers hasting by.

David Morton.

FORGOTTEN

All day the branches are so softly stirred,
And ever comes a song the wind has made,
The sunlight mingles with the drowsy shade,
Deep in the wood a lonely thrush is heard.

Quiet and peace across the sleeping vale
That was forgot so many years ago;
Now through the pathways tall rank grasses grow,
Tossing unhindered in the gentle gale.

For they who used to walk these lovely ways
Long since departed nor will come again—
Never a footstep in the scented lane
That once had known such happy yesterdays.

And where the path was then so red with bloom
Only the creeping brier its tangle shows;
Save in the last still watches, one lone rose
Sends through the ghostly dusk a faint perfume.

And they who rest and long have found surcease
Upon the little hill girt round with trees,
Are silent through the seasons' mysteries,
Deep in the slumber of their simple peace.

Dear lonely place, you mean so much to me
For I have known as you the joy of Spring,
And somehow in your sweet remembering
You touch the very soul of memory.

Thomas S. Jones, Jr.

THE SOUND OF THE SEA

Always here where I sleep I hear the sound of the sea,
Rolling along the dunes, along the desolate places,
Full of a memory vague of dreams and remembered faces.
Always here where I sleep I hear the sound of the sea.

So have I heard it sound for twenty summers or more,
Roaring up through the meadows between the illuminate houses,
Up through the starry fields where the black herd sleepily browses.
So have I heard it sound for twenty summers or more.

Ever that sound it has, always, whenever I hear it.
Sometimes it makes me happy, remembering days that were glad
And full of the breath of June, sometimes it makes me sad—
Ever that sound it has, always, whenever I hear it.

Under quivering stars and stars that were clouded
and scattered,
All through my moments of joy and pain, of
sleeping and dreaming,
Always that quiet murmur sorrowfully was
streaming,
Under quivering stars and stars that were clouded
and scattered.

Out of that somber voice swept on the wings of
Time,
Shall I not, bending down from the starry trellis
of heaven,
Look on this empty room, these meadows shining
and even—
Out of that somber voice swept on the wings of
Time!

John Hall Wheelock.

THE STORM

The souls of the cruel, dead kings ride out on the wind to-night,
They slash the trees as they pass, and the branches shiver and fall;
They thunder with galloping hoofs on the roofs of cottage and hall,
And the flame on the hearth leaps high, and we cross ourselves in fright.

Kings that were slain in fury, and kings that perished in pride,
They have bridled the black North winds and loosed them to work their will.
They crash through the lowest valley, they sweep up the highest hill,
And the sound of a thousand trumpets goes with them the while they ride.

The souls of the cruel, dead kings are out in the hail and snow.
(That was a mailed hand striking just now at the window bars)!
I wish I might think of my placid saints or the friendly, vigilant stars;
But my heart is a blown and trampled leaf on the roads the mad kings go.

Theodosia Garrison.

DAWN BROKE TO-DAY

Dawn broke to-day, a sodden, beaten thing,
Old and forlorn and wet with tears of grief,
As though some secret violence had befallen,
Leaving Day dumb, heart-broken, quivering.
The hush of death held every flower and leaf,
Only the brooks ran turbulent and swollen.
And, strangely, in long silences that hung
Upon the air, void as a tongueless bell,
A leaf would fall, sedately and alone,
Stripped from the vibrant bough where it had clung
By some stray wind from whence no one could tell,
Drifting unhurriedly to the Unknown,
Much as old dear beliefs will fall at last
Yellowed by time, tear-wet, but still believing.
Hour after hour leaves floated down, forlorn,
And all the trees seemed dreaming of the past,
So that one could not tell if they were grieving
For beauty missed or beauty they had borne.
And presently, like drops from some heart's blood,
The slow red leaves came dripping through the air,
The smell of death, decay and soaking mud
Went floating past and settled everywhere:
The very pulses slowed, for nothing moved;
All was so old, exhausted and unloved.

Then from the stubble, swiftly, without sound,
A late lark soared and dived and disappeared:
And all was changed—the seamed and wrinkled
ground
Became an old face memory has endeared;
A clownish wind leapt up, and in a trice
The sober trees with gusty laughter shook;
The fallen leaves ran past like little mice;
A patch of ragged blue shone in the brook;
And in the blind and darkened soul of me,
Brightly as flags, my thoughts flew gallantly.

Amory Hare.

WIND AND LYRE

Thou art the wind and I the lyre:
  Strike, O Wind, on the sleeping strings—
  Strike till the dead heart stirs and sings!
I am the altar and thou the fire:
  Burn, O Fire, to a snowy flame—
  Burn me clean of the mortal blame!

I am the night and thou the dream:
  Touch me softly and thrill me deep,
  When all is white on the hills of sleep.
Thou art the moon and I the stream:
  Shine to the trembling heart of me,
  Light my soul to the mother-sea.

Edwin Markham.

AUTUMN SONG

Once more the crimson rumor
  Fills the forest and the town;
And the green fires of summer
  Are burning, burning down.

Oh, the green fires of summer
  Are burning down once more!
And my heart is in the ashes
  On the forest floor.

William Griffith.

AND THE LITTLE WIND———

Said a rose amid the June night to a little wind there walking
(And the whisper of the moonlight was no fainter than its talking):
"It is plainly providential," so remarked the garden Tory,
"That the ultimate essential is the gentle rose's glory.
Let the sordid delvers cavil! Through the world-fog sinking seaward
And the planetary travail God was slowly groping me-ward.
Weary ages of designing, æons of creative throes
Spent the Master in refining sullen chaos to a rose!
Shall He robe His chosen meanly? Look upon me; am I splendid?"
Here she stood erect and queenly, curled a lip and ended.
And the little wind there walking, not desirous of dissension,
In a gust of cryptic talking freely granted the contention.

Like the murmur of a far stream or a zephyr in the sedges,

Scarcely louder than the star-gleam raining silver
on the hedges,
Came a whisper from the humus where the roots
were toiling blindly:
"They enslave us, they entomb us! Is it just and
is it kindly?
Ours, forever ours, to nourish—oh, the drear, eternal
duty!—
That the idle rose may flourish in aristocratic
beauty.
Not for us the wooing, tender moon emerges from
the far night;
Not for us the morning splendor and the witchery
of starlight;
Not for us the dulcet cantion of the rain to throb-
bing lutes
And there's no cerulean mansion for the roots."
Now the little wind, demurely sympathetic, cogi-
tated,
And declared the matter surely ought to be investi-
gated.

"Fie!" observed the fair patrician, "on their silly
martyr poses!
Not content with their condition, always wanting to
be roses!"
Whereupon a theophanic, superlunar phosphores-
cense
Flung the haughty into panic, awed the humble to
quiescence.
'Twas the Vintner of the June-wind on his world-
wide, endless vagrance;

And he spoke the tongue of moonshine in the dialect
of fragrance:
"Brother, Sister, softly, softly! Glooming, gleam-
ing though the way be,
Who is low and who is lofty in the scheme of what
you may be?
Pride and plaint are irreligious. Root and blossom,
lo! you plod
Upward to some far, prodigious rose of God!"
And the little wind, though shyly sleeping out the
time of talking,
Woke to praise the sermon highly, and continued
with his walking.

John G. Neihardt.

BALLADE OF THE DREAMLAND ROSE

Where the waves of burning cloud are rolled
  On the further shore of the sunset sea,
In a land of wonder that none behold,
  There blooms a rose on the Dreamland Tree
That stands in the Garden of Mystery
  Where the River of Slumber softly flows;
And whenever a dream has come to be,
  A petal falls from the Dreamland Rose.

In the heart of the tree, on a branch of gold,
  A silvern bird sings endlessly
A mystic song that is ages old,
  A mournful song in a minor key,
Full of the glamour of faëry;
  And whenever a dreamer's ears unclose
To the sound of that distant melody,
  A petal falls from the Dreamland Rose.

Dreams and visions in hosts untold
  Throng around on that moonlit lea:
Dreams of age that are calm and cold,
  Dreams of youth that are fair and free—
Dark with a lone heart's agony,
  Bright with a hope that no one knows—
And whenever a dream and a dream agree,
  A petal falls from the Dreamland Rose.

Envoi

Princess, you gaze in a reverie
  Where the drowsy firelight redly glows;
Slowly you raise your eyes to me . . .
  A petal falls from the Dreamland Rose.

Brian Hooker.

"SHE WANDERED AFTER STRANGE GODS . . ."

O have you seen my fairy steed?
  His eyes are wild, his mane is white,
He feeds upon an elfin weed
  In cool of autumn night.

O have you heard my fairy steed,
  Whose cry is like a wandering loon?
He mourns some cloudy star-strewn mead
  On mountains of the moon.

O have you tamed my fairy horse
  To mount upon his back and ride?
He tears the great trees in his course,
  Nor ever turns aside.

'Tis he who tames a fairy thing
  Must suffer want and bitter fate!
Deftly the bridles did I fling
  That brought him to my gate.

I soothed and fed and tendered him
  Sweet herbs and honey in a cup,
And led him in the twilight dim
  To where a spring welled up.

But there his wings they waved so bright
  Before my eyes, I drooped and slept.
When I awoke, it seemed dark night.
  I raised my voice and wept.

Alas, my lightsome fairy steed!
  I saw my pastures trampled bare
Where I had sown the springtime seed
  And planted flowers rare!

I saw my barns a mass of flame!
  His fiery wings had glanced in flight.
And me—a prey to fear and shame—
  He left, to seek the light!

Laura Benét.

ALLEGORY

There is a temple in our mystic city
Where mumbling masks perpetually come.
The mightly gates are brass. Two women stand,
Two brazen figures, veiled and vast and dumb,
Beside the doors like sentinels on each hand,
And one is Fear, and one—alas!—is Pity.

Without those speechless courts, that awful portal,
The light of sun or star is never known:
Dim pillars rise and some strange altar fire
Burns gem-like in the dark where shadows moan,
And hollow echoes as of bells are dire,
And mockery flouts the path of every mortal.

There, from the velvet walls drip down confusion,
Mixings of soul and sense, of shadow and sound
Which on the spirit fall like blood and rain.
I think the place is some enchanted ground
Where kneeling masks implore eternal pain
Of their mad god whose name is Disillusion!

My soul, my love and I came here one day,
And wondered at the walls, the fire, the floors,
The drip of silence and the lisping dead,
And all we knelt by vague, mysterious doors—
Then horror fell upon us and we fled,
My love and I. My soul remained to pray.

Howard Mumford Jones.

THE TIGER-WOMAN

The Tiger-Woman came to me
When dusk was close and men were dull.
She beckoned from the jungle-path.
I followed, dreaming, fanciful.

The Tiger-Woman's face is pale,
But oh, her speaking eyes are dark.
No beast can move so lithe as she
Beside the matted river's mark.

The jungle is a fearsome place
For men who hunt and men who slay,
But I was not afraid to go
Where Tiger-Woman led the way.

The Tiger-Woman's lips are thin.
Her teeth are like the Tiger's teeth.
Yet her soft hands are woman's hands
And oh, the warm blood beats beneath.

She led me to a little glade—
The creepers with the moon inwove—
And two great stripèd beasts leapt up
And fawned upon her breast in love.

The Tiger-Woman's voice was sweet;
I hearkened and was not afraid.
She stroked the Tiger's fearful jaws;
Upon their heads my hands I laid.

And all the jungle things drew near,
And all the leaves a music made,
Like spirits chaunting in a choir
Along the bamboo colonnade.

Too sweet for human harps to sound,
It touched my blood; it fired my heart.
The Tiger-Woman sang, and I
Sang too, and understood her art.

The moon rose up as never yet
A moon of love had blessed the air.
Oh, give my breast the Tiger's heart
To tame me and to keep me there.

Donald Davidson.

MADMAN'S SONG

Better to see your cheek grown hollow,
  Better to see your temple worn,
Than to forget to follow, follow,
  After the sound of a silver horn.

Better to bind your brow with willow
  And follow, follow until you die
Than to sleep with your head on a golden pillow,
  Nor lift it up when the hunt goes by.

Better to see your cheek grown sallow
  And your hair grown gray, so soon, so soon,
Than to forget to hallo, hallo,
  After the milk-white hounds of the moon.

Elinor Wylie.

IMPROVIDENT

"And I shall sing a song," I said,
"Or sit upon a hill
To watch the April breezes tease
The freshet by the mill.

"A primrose chaplet I shall wear,
And place upon my hair,
Then run the fields the livelong day,
Nor give a thought to care."

This did I even as I sang
And danced the glades along,
But soon the primrose wreath was dead,
And dead was daylight's song.

"It had been wiser," then said I,
"If I had made a hood
To shelter me when darkness fell
Upon the field and wood."

Hesper Le Gallienne.

THE FALCONER OF GOD

I flung my soul to the air like a falcon flying.
I said, "Wait on, wait on, while I ride below!
I shall start a heron soon
In the marsh beneath the moon—
A strange white heron rising with silver on its wings,
Rising and crying
Wordless, wondrous things:
The secret of the stars, of the world's heart-strings,
The answer to their woe.
Then stoop thou upon him, and grip and hold him so!"

My wild soul waited on as falcons hover.
I beat the reedy fens as I trampled past.
I heard the mournful loon
In the marsh beneath the moon.
And then—with feathery thunder—the bird of my desire
Broke from the cover
Flashing silver fire.
High up among the stars I saw his pinions spire.
The pale clouds gazed aghast
As my falcon stoopt upon him, and gript and held him fast.

My soul dropt through the air—with heavenly
plunder?—
Gripping the dazzling bird my dreaming knew?
Nay! but a piteous freight,
A dark and heavy weight
Despoiled of silver plumage, its voice forever
stilled,—
All of the wonder
Gone that ever filled
Its guise with glory. Oh, bird that I have killed,
How brilliantly you flew
Across my rapturous vision when first I dreamed
of you!

Yet I fling my soul on high with new endeavor,
And I ride the world below with a joyful mind.
I shall start a heron soon
In the marsh beneath the moon—
A wondrous silver heron its inner darkness fledges.
I beat forever
The fens and the sedges.
The pledge is still the same—for all distastrous
pledges,
All hopes resigned!
My soul still flies above me for the quarry it shall
find.

William Rose Benét.

THE HORSEMAN

My spirit is a horseman
  Riding, riding on,
Relentlessly, relentlessly,
  To the burst of dawn.

It rides on as the stars ride
  To that burst of light,
Forgetting, forgetting
  Stars only shine by night.

Idella Purnell.

DE GUSTIBUS

One used his pinions eagle-like,
  And straight against the sun would rise
And scout among the stars, and strike
  His quarry from across the skies;

And one was as the bee that strives
  Against no wind, but simply blows
Across the garden, and arrives
  Upon an unsuspected rose.

John Erskine.

THE FUTILE

The stone falls, the bird flies, the arrow goes home,
But we have no motion, we scatter like foam.

O, give me a song to sing for your sorrow,
A song that will lift, like a wave from the reef,
You and myself, that will fling like an arrow
My poor scattered words to the target of grief:
I want to forget, to remember no morrow,
To go with the petrel, to go with the leaf. . . .

We would fly with all things to the goal of their flying,
We would turn with all things to the magnetic star,
But we never can live, because of our dying,
And we never can be, for the things that we are.

We alone of all creatures—the stones more than we—
Have no end, no motion, no destiny.

Genevieve Taggard.

THE PLAY

And still the play goes on, nor ever palls—
  Laughter and comedy and mock despair;
But nightly, as the final curtain falls,
  Mirth doffs her mask to show the face of Care.

Doris Kenyon.

THE PHANTOM CARAVAN

Out of the Dusk they troop, my son, from the uttermost pales of the Past,
Where the spark of their lives was lit by the Norns and their courses molded and cast.
As a cavalcade they ride them forth, in a line from Ab to you;
Your brawn is theirs and your brain is theirs; you do as they bid you do.
The urge of a million sires and dames in the blood of your pulses runs
As your own urge will sometime surge in the sons of your children's sons.
In weird array the grim and gay, the priest and the pagan ride;
The knight with the knave, the king with the slave and the wanton, side by side.
Out of the dusk they troop—a wild, fantastical masque of man,
As we shall ride in the blood of our sons in the phantom caravan.

. . . . . .

The Pilgrim with the Vandal rides,
The Saxon with the Gaul,
The sons of David, Lludd and Noah
Ride with the sons of Saul.

One is a Prince Henry of Navarre;
  Leonidas is there,
And Richard of the Lion Heart
  And Alex Do-and-Dare.

One is the Seigneur Ber du Lac,
  Sometimes surnamed The Lance,
Who fought the fight and died the death
  With Joan, the Maid of France.

And one is Aram, priest of Baal,
  Who braved the wrath of Tyre
To preach his Word, and for that Word
  Was done to death by fire.

And one is Arnold, he whose voice
  Nor King nor Pope could still,
Who fought for Right,—and for that Right
  Was hanged on Caelus Hill.

One is Gur Khan of Balasghun,
  The warrior King and Seer,
Who broke the might of Islam's arms
  At Ibn al-Athir.

And hosts there be of goodly folk
  Who run of small renown,—
Of soldier, merchant, scholar, prince,
  Of cobbler, clerk, and clown.

And one is Anne, who watched the herds
  And spread her humble board
Before the poor, and spun the flax
  And died within the Lord.

And there be shepherd, tradesman, groom
Who went but lowly ways,
Who tilled the field, and ground the grain
Through unadventured days.

And some be of the wastrel folk,
Of spendthrift, tyrant, cheat,
Of wanton, witch, and thief, who grew
As tares grow in the wheat.

There ride Sir Sidney, Bayard, Drake,
There Cyrus rides, the Mede,
And some there be of Hector's line
And some of Beowulf's breed.

These be the folk who kept the faith
And lived and loved thereby,—
Who fought the fight, who ran the race,
Who died as men should die.

. . . . . .

The flames of a million sires and dames in the blood of your pulses run;
Of a million flames to feed and serve, how can you serve but one?
Their prides are yours; their loves and their lusts, their hopes and their hates are your own;
You are the fruit that their loins have bred, the flower of the seed they have sown.
Their lives are spun as the threads of your cloak, through the warp and the woof of your Whole;
Your hands are theirs and your eyes are theirs and your Mold and your Self and your Soul.

The dreams they dreamed and the fights they fought
and the prayers that their lips have prayed
Shall be your dreams and shall be your prayers;
your fights are the fights they made.
The lives they lived and the deaths they died you
shall live and die again;
In you is the seed of a million hopes of a million
maids and men.
*God grant, my son, that you fight the fight and hold
to the faith. Amen!*

Kendall Banning.

Sometimes, within the brain's old ghostly house,
I hear, far off, at some forgotten door,
A music and an eerie faint carouse,
And stir of echoes down the creaking floor,

And then I rise and through the dusty gloom
Grope with swift fingers as a blind man goes,
Half sensing, half remembering the room,
Building the image of the world he knows,

And fumbling so down lightless passages
And winding stairs and windowless dark halls,
Now beckoned by the music's faint excess,
Now lost and listening at unsounding walls,

I come at last where, bolted in the stone,
A ruined door leans inward, and beyond
The voices clamor and the tune is blown
In swirl and silence of wind-troubled sound.

And then, impassioned of the thronging gods,
Eager of beauty, unlock bolts and bars,—
Alone, with grinning head that nods and nods,
Myself stand gibbering against the stars.

Archibald MacLeish.

MEMORY

Here only echoes build a futile chime
Out of the winds that blew the broken rose,
And Life's a shadow-masque withdrawn from Time
Where Love, a crying singer, comes and goes
When moons are blowing and the earth is white
With beauty or the thought of beauty dead;
And here broods Sorrow with a hanging head,
And pale Regret moans every candle-light. . . .

George Brandon Saul.

A MEMORY

Is it the spirit of a dream—
  The dearest memory—
Is it the essence of a flower,
  The soul of ecstasy?—

As the pure fragrance that is given
  To steal upon the air,
The long-loved memory of you
  Steals on me, unaware:

And everything that's beautiful,
  And everything that's true,
And everything that's lovely, pure,
  Is in the thought of you.

Brookes More.

RECOLLECTION

I must forget awhile the mellow flutes
And all the lyric wizardry of strings;
  The fragile clarinet,
Tremulous over meadows rich with dawn,
  Must knock against my vagrant heart
  And throb and cry no more.

For I am shaken by the loveliness
And lights and laughter and beguiling song
  Of all this siren world;
The regal beauty of women, round on round,
  The swift, lithe slenderness of girls,
  And children's loyal eyes,

Hill rivers and the lilac fringe of seas
Lazily plunging, glow of city nights
  And faces in the glow—
These things have stolen my heart away, I lie
  Parceled abroad in sound and hue,
  Dispersed through all I love.

I must go far away to a still place
And draw the shadows down across my eyes
  And wait and listen there

For wings vibrating from beyond the stars,
  Wide-ranging, swiftly winnowing wings
  Bearing me back mine own.

So soon, now, I shall lie deep hidden away
From sound or sight, with hearing strangely dull
  And heavy-lidded eyes,—
'Tis time, O passionate soul, for me to go
  Some far, hill-folded road apart
  And learn the ways of peace.

Odell Shepard.

SHIP OF THE YEARS

Too slowly the Ship of the Years from dreamy horizons is drifting.
Blow on her sagging sails, oh winds, speeding her wings toward the west;—
The west where the Evening star her candle is quietly lifting,
Where a lonely bird is flying and crying that peace is best.

I, like a lonely bird, am weary of my heart's wild beating;
Weary of youth with its splendor and laughter and love that are pain.
I would seal my ears to the call that the mating larks are repeating;
I would blind my eyes to the rose, to the light of the April rain.

Oh youth, sweet youth, you are cruel, too cruel-sweet for bearing:
I would sit in the moonlight all unhurt by dreams, with peaceful breath.
Sail swifter, Ship of the Years, swifter! I would be faring
To the haven where with a quiet heart I may look in the face of Death.

Mary Sinton Leitch.

THE GRAY NORNS

What do you bring in your sacks, Gray Girls?
"Sea-sand and sorrow."
What is the mist that behind you whirls?
"The souls of to-morrow."

What are those shapes on the windy coasts?
"The dead souls going."
But what are the loads on the backs of the ghosts?
"The seed of their sowing."

Edwin Markham.

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN HOW THAT JUGGLER—FATE

Have you forgotten how that juggler—Fate,
Tossing the brittle balls of happiness,
Broke all of them and mocked at our distress,
When, back to earth you came, alas, too late!
I was a gray-haired Counselor of State,
You were a princess, and each shining tress
Was burnished gold to crown your loveliness—
Gray locks and golden do not match or mate.
With outstretched hands you, smiling, came to me,
Crossing the cruel chasm of the years.
I was too wise to hope, and spite of tears
We said farewell under a leafless tree
In a dead garden, 'neath a dying moon,
When you were born too late, and I too soon.

William Lindsey.

THE GHOST

One whom I loved and never can forget
  Returned to me in dream, and spoke with me,
  As audibly, as sweet familiarly
As though warm fingers twined warm fingers yet.
Her eyes were bright and with great wonder wet
  As in old days when some strange, swift decree
  Brought touch-close love or death; and sorrow-
    free
She spoke, as one long purged of all regret.

I heard, oh, glad beyond all speech, I heard;
  Till to my lips the flaming query flashed:
    How is it—over there? Then, quite undone,
She trembled; in her deep eyes like a bird
  The gladness fluttered, and as one abashed
    She shook her head bewildered, and was gone.

Hermann Hagedorn.

THE MOTH

Moth, on thy gilded wings,
Close where the lily springs,
  I saw thee flying.
Here by my candle light,
Wingless you lie to-night,
  Wingless and dying.

How like to souls afar
Viewing a burning star,
  Yearning and sighing.
How like star-pinioned dreams,
Foiled on the lesser beams,
  Visionless lying.

Robert Earl Brownlee.

THE UNSEEN WORLD

We never dreamed it was so near,
  And yet we might have known
Had we surmised from what bright sphere
  The viewless wings had flown,
    Or seen above her cradled head
    A mist-like, shining halo spread.

But round her pillowed helplessness
  Some wistful influence
Wove its soft spell, nor could we guess
  What beckonings lured her hence,
    Till through the fond, enfolding skies
    She vanished back to Paradise.

James B. Kenyon.

DIRGE

(From "Lilith")

O lay her gently where the lark is nesting
And wingéd things are glad.
Tears end, and now begins the time of resting
For her whose heart was sad.

Give roses, but a fairer bloom is taken.
Strew lilies—she was one,
Gone in her silence to a place forsaken
By roses and the sun.

Deep is her slumber at the last of sorrow,
Of twilight and the rain.
Her eyes have closed forever on to-morrow
And on to-morrow's pain.

George Sterling.

ON A DEAD MOTH

Who knows what trouble trembled in that throat,
  What sweet distraction for the summer moon,
That lured you out, a frail, careering boat,
  Across the midnight's purple, deep lagoon!
Some fire of madness lit that tiny brain,
  Some soft propulsion clouded through your breast,
And lifted you, a white and moving stain,
  Against the dark of that disastrous quest.

The sadness of all brief and lovely things,
  The fine and futile passions that we bear,
Haunt the bright wreck of your too fragile wings,
  And win a pity for you, ended there,—
Like us, hurled backward to the final shade,
From mad adventures for a moon or maid.

David Morton.

ONE BY ONE, ONE BY ONE

One by one, one by one,
Stitches of the hours run
Through the fine seams of the day,
Till like a garment it is done
And laid away.

One by one the days go by,
And suns climb up and down the sky;
One by one their seams are run—
As Time's untiring fingers ply
And life is done.

Hazel Hall.

Death comes like this, I know—
Snow-soft and gently cold;
Impalpable battalions of thin mist,
Light-quenching and sound-smothering and slow.

Slack as a wind-spilled sail
The spent world flaps in space—
Day's but a grayer night, and the old sun
Up the blind sky goes heavily and pale.

Out of all circumstance
I drift or seem to drift
In a vague vapor-world that clings and veils
Great trees arow like kneeling elephants.

How vast your voice is grown
That was so silver-soft;
Dim dies the candle-glory of your face—
Though we go hand in hand, I am alone.

Now Love and all the warm
Pageant of livingness
Trouble my quiet like forgotten dreams
Of ancient thunder on the hills of storm.

How loud, how terribly
Aflame are lights and sounds!
And yet beyond the fog I know there are
But lonely bells across gray wastes of sea.

John Reed.

L'ENVOI

Where are the loves that we have loved before
When once we are alone, and shut the door?
No matter whose the arms that held me fast,
The arms of Darkness hold me at the last.
No matter what the primrose path I tend,
I kiss the lips of Silence in the end.
No matter on what heart I found delight,
I come again unto the breast of Night.
No matter when or how love did befall,
'Tis Loneliness that loves me best of all,
And in the end she claims me, and I know
That she will stay, though all the rest may go.
No matter whose the eyes that I would keep
Near in the dark, 'tis in the eyes of Sleep
That I must look and look forevermore,
When once I am alone, and shut the door.

Willa Cather.

INDEX OF AUTHORS

PAGE

Addison, Medora 156
Auslander, Joseph 71
Banks, Theodore H. Jr. 88
Banning, Kendall 56, 60, 186
Bates, Katherine Lee 109
Beer, Morris Abel 43, 148
Beers, Henry A. 117
Bellinger, Alfred R. 80
Benét, Laura 173
Benét, Stephen Vincent 136
Benét, William Rose 36, 180
Bird, Stephen Moylan 140
Brownlee, Robert Earl 199
Burnet, Dana 106
Bynner, Witter 44, 62, 84
Cather, Willa 205
Clark, Thomas Curtis 118
Coolbrith, Ina 26, 116
Dalton, Power 104
Davidson, Donald 176
Davis, Fannie Stearns 78
Dodd, Lee Wilson 105
Dow, Dorothy 83
Erskine, John 125, 183
Fagon, Louis 57
Ficke, Arthur Davidson 49, 66, 77, 87, 115

PAGE
Frazee-Bower, Helen 103
Garrison, Theodosia 163
Giovannitti, Arturo 9
Griffith, William 157, 167
Hagedorn, Hermann 18, 76, 122, 145, 152, 198
Hall, Hazel 99, 203
Hammond, Eleanor 100
Hare, Amory 1, 25, 61, 73, 110, 164
Hillyer, Robert 135
Hooker, Brian 58, 74, 153, 171
Johns, Orrick 64
Jones, Howard Mumford 19, 175
Jones, Thomas S., Jr. 17, 82, 90, 119, 160
Kemp, Harry 59, 134
Kenyon, Bernice Lesbia 50
Kenyon, Doris 185
Kenyon, James B. 48, 200
Lee, Agnes 98, 129, 144
Leitch, Mary Sinton 195
Le Gallienne, Hesper 179
Lindsay, Vachel 142
Lindsey, William 197
Linn, Edith Willis 131
Lowell, Amy 158
MacLeish, Archibald 190
Markham, Edwin 151, 166, 196
May, Beulah 114
McCormick, Virginia Taylor 46, 102
Middleton, Scudder 141
Mixter, Florence Kilpatrick 52
More, Brookes 192
Moreland, John Richard 55, 81
Morton, David 30, 111, 113, 139, 159, 202
Neihardt, John G. 5, 168

PAGE
O'Sheel, Shaemas 121
Percy, William Alexander 42, 96
Pfeiffer, Edward H. 24, 146
Pulsifer, Harold Trowbridge 16
Purnell, Idella 182
Ramsaur, Hugh Wilgus 128
Reed, John 204
Reese, Lizette Woodworth 2, 45, 51, 120, 155
Rice, Cale Young 3, 41, 63
Roberts, Lillian Mayfield 32
Robinson, Edwin Arlington 10, 101
Roth, Samuel 91
Santayana, George 7, 72, 75
Saul, George Brandon 6, 191
Scollard, Clinton 27
Shepard, Odell 193
Smith, Marion Couthouy 31
Sterling, George 29, 86, 112, 130, 201
Taggard, Genevieve 33, 70, 184
Teasdale, Sara 97
Towne, Charles Hanson 20, 54, 150
Van Dyke, Henry 124
Vinal, Harold 39
Wheelock, John Hall 8, 161
Wylie, Elinor 85, 178
Young, Barbara 34

MODERN BRITISH
LYRICS

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PREFACE

There are two obvious ways of compiling an anthology of verse. The first is to confine one's self primarily to the more popular works of the more popular writers; the second is to disregard names and reputations alike in the search for poems that will shine by their own inherent qualities. In the case of compilations covering material that has repeatedly been sifted and re-sifted, the former method will perhaps prove advantageous; in the case of compilations invading virgin or relatively untrodden areas, the latter system alone can be expected to yield results. And it is this plan, accordingly, which I have attempted to follow in "Modern British Lyrics." As in my American anthology, I have been guided by the realization that the contemporary field is still largely in a state of critical chaos; that the authentic pearls and diamonds have yet to be sorted out from the gems of paste and glass; that a large quantity of noteworthy work must inevitably escape notice amid the continuous inundations of the written word; and that too often an author will flare into prominence merely by accident or by a meretricious ap-

peal to the taste of a moment while others of more solid merit must sing in loneliness and obscurity.

For this reason, I have endeavored to make "Modern British Lyrics" representative less of those poets whose names are on every one's tongue than of their more numerous fellows who are heard only as voices in the wilderness. While I have not gone to the fatuous extent of excluding any writer simply because he is well known, I have striven not to emphasize that which is no longer in need of emphasis; I have aimed to consider the poem first and the name of the author afterwards if at all; I have sought at all times to avoid the great pitfall of the anthologist—the error of mere reduplication, of a barren republication of that which has already been abundantly made public. If in some few cases I have felt an irresistible attraction for poems that have previously appeared in anthologies, yet in general I have attempted to strike out for the trackless spaces, for the hidden byways and treasure caves of poetry, and so to bring before the American public the work of deserving British poets that might otherwise have escaped attention.

In this project I have been actuated throughout by a definite principle of selection. As the title of the anthology implies, I have restricted my choice to poems with a lyrical element; and, as in "Modern American Lyrics," I have confined myself to verse in the traditional forms and meters, making the quality of music the primary technical test of the poetic. But since the *vers libre* movement has taken root less firmly in Great Britain than in

America, and since the innovators in form and in particular the eccentrics are less conspicuous abroad, the lyric basis of the selection need not be emphasized as in the case of the American compilation; and I may limit myself to explaining that certain dramatic and narrative poets of distinction, and even some ostensible lyricists of reputation, have been excluded because their work has not that singing strain which has been the hallmark of every notable lyric writer from Sappho to Francis Ledwidge and Walter de la Mare.

Aside from the restrictions as to form and musical quality, the question of inclusion and exclusion has necessarily been largely a matter of individual discretion. Because of the size of the field, I have been compelled to confine my selections to the British Isles; because of my desire to make the volume essentially contemporary, I have given the preference to living poets or to those who might be living but for a premature death on the battlefield; and because the unexplored spaces are so wide, the darkness still so unsounded, I have perhaps had to yield occasionally to mere groping chance, and by inadvertence may have neglected poets quite as worthy of recognition as any that are represented. The restrictions of copyright, moreover, have played their ironclad and unfortunate part in the elimination of certain writers, and even in the omission of desirable poems by those whose names grace the table of contents.

But it is with particular pleasure that I acknowledge my indebtedness and my gratitude to those

authors and publishers who, by their kindliness and courtesy, have lightened a task that might otherwise have proved impossible of consummation:

To Basil Blackwell (Oxford), for the use of poems by Gerald Gould, Roger Heath, Vera Larminie, and Madeline Nightingale.

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S. A. C.

New York, June, 1925.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	v
ABSENT AND PRESENT, *Laurence Housman*	67
ACHIEVEMENT, *Margaret Sackville*	186
ALIEN ENEMIES, *Gerald Gould*	147
ALTER EGO, *Kenneth H. Ashley*	160
ANCIENT MOTHER, THE, *Margaret S. Dangerfield*	42
ARCADY IN ENGLAND, *V. Sackville-West*	82
BALLAD OF CAMDEN TOWN, *James Elroy Flecker*	187
BALLAD OF DREAMLAND, *Henry De Vere Stacpoole*	202
BALLAD OF THE SOUTH COUNTRY, *E. A. Fielder*	210
BARCAROLLE, *S. Matthewman*	20
BEAUTY, *William Kean Seymour*	18
"BETWEEN," *Joan Warburg*	185
BIRD ON YGDRASIL, THE, *James A. Mackereth*	203
BLACKBIRD, THE, *Martin Armstrong*	191
CAPTIVE LION, THE, *W. H. Davies*	126
CHANGE OF VIEW, *S. Marguerite Goode*	127
CITY OF SLEEP, THE, *Laurence Housman*	205
COMING POET, THE, *Francis Ledwidge*	165
COUNCIL OF GILGAMESH, THE, *Sheila Kaye-Smith*	110
CROSSROADS, *E. M. Kelly*	189
DARK WAY, THE, *Joseph Mary Plunkett*	99
DARKLING THRUSH, THE, *Thomas Hardy*	36
DEAD POET, A, *Cecil Roberts*	214
DISILLUSION, *Winifred N. James*	113
DREAMER, THE, *E. V. Rieu*	77
DUNSFORT BOG, *Miriam A. Coppinger*	71
ELEGY, *Robert Bridges*	34

PAGE

ELEGY, *Edward Shanks* 144
EMBARKMENT, *Maisie Bell Whyte* 172
EVENING, *V. Sackville-West* 104
FAERIE, *Charles Williams* 63
FALLEN SOLDIER, A, *V. Sackville-West* 143
FINE EVENING, *Sylvia Lynd* 84
FIRE-FLIES, *A. Mary F. Robinson* 46
FOOL, THE, *E. G. Morice* 167
GHOST, THE, *Vera Larminie* 57
GHOST HUNTERS, *Violet Le Maistre* 62
GIANT PUFFBALL, THE, *Edmund Blunden* 120
GOD'S HILLS, *William Noel Hodgson* 91
GREAT SHIPS, THE, *Cecil Roberts* 197
HAMMERS, THE, *Ralph Hodgson* 159
HAPPY TREE, THE, *Gerald Gould* 125
HAPPY WAS I, *Edward Davison* 55
HARE, THE, *Sylvia Lynd* 49
HAUNTED, *Molly A. Paley* 61
HAUNTED, *Esther Raworth* 78
HAVEN, *Vera I. Arlett* 184
HORSES, *Edwin Muir* 117
HUNTING SONG, *Sylvia Lynd* 193
IDEAL, THE, *A. Mary F. Robinson* 2
IF BEAUTY CAME TO YOU, *William Kean Seymour* . . 190
IMMORTALITY, *John Drinkwater* 12
IMMORTALITY, *Sheila Kaye-Smith* 21
IN SEPTEMBER, *Francis Ledwidge* 97
IN SPRING, *Molly Young* 81
IN THE GLOAMING, *Meta Orred* 177
LAMENT OF THE MOLE CATCHER, THE, *Osbert Sitwell* . 52
LANE, THE, *H. Ross* 86
LAST MEMORY, THE, *Arthur Symons* 107
LEADER, THE, *Hilaire Belloc* 208
LEPANTO, *Gilbert Keith Chesterton* 151
LINES ON A BULLFINCH, FREED, *Pamela Tennant* . . 192
LOGIE KIRK, *Violet Jacob* 70
LONELINESS, *N. J. Kessler* 96

PAGE
Love of Life, *E. A. Renshaw* 114
Love's Madness, *Gerald Gould* 171
March, The, *J. C. Squire* 141
Meeting, The, *Katherine Tynan* 175
Night Wind, The, *Edith M. Walker* 69
Old, The, *H. Ross* 168
Old Woman, The, *Marjorie Holmes* 108
On a House Being Pulled Down, *J. Slingsby Roberts* 130
On Growing Old, *John Masefield* 105
On the Western Cliffs, *A. C. Benson* 39
Orielda, *Oscar Boulton* 212
Out of Weakness, *A. C. Benson* 115
Personality, *A. Mary F. Robinson* 101
Pierrot at the War, *Osbert Sitwell* 150
Points of View, *Kenneth H. Ashley* 131
Pulvis et Umbra, *A. Mary F. Robinson* 161
Quiet House, The, *Katherine Tynan* 95
Quod Semper, *Lucy Lyttleton* 134
Re-birth of the Soul, The, *Herbert E. Palmer* . . 80
Reflections, *W. A. Lee* 15
Refuge, *Vera I. Arlett* 183
Remembrance, *Edwin Muir* 87
Remorse, *Nancy Pollok* 170
Return, The, *Ethel Ashton Edwards* 31
Return, The, *E. V. Rieu* 54
Return, The, *Duncan J. Robertson* 89
Revenants des Enfants, *Frederic Manning* . . . 60
Rhapsody, *Martin Armstrong* 16
Rock Pool, The, *Edward Shanks* 41
Rondel of London, *Lucy Lyttleton* 129
Sail, The, *Cyril G. Taylor* 4
Sea Caves, *Madeline Nightingale* 195
Sea-Madness, *Periwinkle Cotgrave* 43
Seed Shop, The, *Muriel Stuart* 119
Shadow, The, *Vera Larminie* 79
She Whom I Love, *Gerald Gould* 66
Snare, The, *Edward Davison* 19

PAGE

Song, *James Elroy Flecker* 179
Song, *L. A. G. Strong* 181
Song, *Maisie Bell Whyte* 180
Sonnet, *Roger Heath* 14
Soul of Man, The, *Frederic Manning* 163
Souls in Prison, The, *Robert Burness* 122
Sphinx, The, *Lucy Lyttleton* 137
Starling, The, *E. Joyce Harrison* 38
Stranger, The, *W. A. Lee* 128
Summer Night, A, *Duncan J. Robertson* 199
Sursum Cor, *Laurence Binyon* 103
Sword of Surprise, The, *Gilbert Keith Chesterton* . 124
Thought in Two Moods, A, *Thomas Hardy* 112
To a Distant One, *Francis Ledwidge* 26
To All Minor Poets, *Roger Heath* 166
To Germany, *Charles Hamilton Sorley* 146
To Keats, *Lord Dunsany* 164
To My Belovèd Dead, *Ethel Ashton Edwards* . . . 29
To My Mother, *Iris Tree* 23
To-Day, *Everest Lewin* 1
Travellers, The, *Duncan J. Robertson* 9
Triolet, *Bertha Annakin* 182
Tryst, The, *E. V. Rieu* 32
Tumult, *C. B. Tracey* 98
Vision of Beauty, A, *A. E.* 6
Visions, *William Noel Hodgson* 5
Voice of the Waters, The, *A. E.* 44
Waiting, *Helen E. Holland* 27
War Song of the Saracens, *James Elroy Flecker* . . 139
Watermill, The, *Edmund Blunden* 73
Weather Vane, The, *Wilfrid Thorley* 76
Wild Geese, The, *Violet Jacob* 93
Winter Dusk, *Walter de la Mare* 58
Woman's Song, *Edward Shanks* 28
Wounds, *A. C. Benson* 51
Yesternight, *Elfyn Williams David* 53
Youth's Immortalities, *William Noel Hodgson* . . 173

MODERN BRITISH
LYRICS

TO-DAY

Alone To-day stands in the sun.
—Why dream they, who their race must run?
—Between two precipices steep
To-day arises from the deep.

Athwart the deep abyss of night
It stretches like a ribbon bright,

Between the dawn and dusk it lies,
Apex of two eternities:

To-morrow dim and yesterday
Are lost within that twilight grey,

Only a slender patch of light
Between the double jaws of night,
While the full glory of the sun
Proclaims To-day the only one.

Everest Lewin.

THE IDEAL

The night is dark and warm and very still,
Only the moon goes pallid and alone;
The moon and I the whole wide heavens fill,
And all the earth lies little, lost, unknown.

I walk along the byways of my Soul,
Beyond the streets where all the world may go,
Until at last I reach the hidden goal
Built up in strength where only I may know.

For in my Soul a temple have I made,
Set on a height, divine and steep and far,
Nor often may I hope those floors to tread,
Or reach the gates that glimmer like a star.

O secret, inner shining of my dream,
How clear thou risest on my soul to-night!
Forth will I fare and seek the heavenly beam,
And stand within the precincts of the light.

And I will press beyond the curtain'd door,
And up the empty aisle where no one sings;
There will I fall before thee and adore,
And feel the shadowy winnowing of thy wings.

So will I reach thee, Spirit; for I have known
  Thy voice, and looked upon thy blinding eyes,
And well thou knowest the world to me is grown
  One dimness whence thy dreamy beacons rise.

Nor ask I any hope nor any end,
  That thus for thee I dream all day, all night;
But, like the moon along the skies, I wend,
  Knowing no world below my borrowed light.

A. Mary F. Robinson.

THE SAIL

To-day it is as though the rain
Had no beginning in the sky,
Nor touched the earth with its fine train
But like a spectre slanted by.

A spectre that the lost wind blows
To errantries that shape its own,
And like a sail it swells and goes,
And like a sail the wind is blown.

The hulls their ancient moorings slip,
Thick ropes of mist the old woods trail,
Earth moves, a ghostly-timbered ship,
Behind that urgent, sweeping sail.

And some perceiving wraith am I,
Who watch from a forgotten strand
The shrouded ship of time sail by—
A spectral sail in sole command.

Cyril G. Taylor.

VISIONS

When in the blue dusk of a summer night
I watch God's largess of His silver stars,
Sometimes, it seems, the adamantine bars
Fall from the tall gates of the Infinite;
And Time stands waiting. Then I seem to hear,
As one that listens from a lonely height
To waters breaking on an unknown sea,
The strong pulse of the world-heart throbbing near;
The mists roll back, and for a space stand clear
The great white windows of eternity.

William Noel Hodgson.

Where we sat at dawn together, while the star-rich
heavens shifted,
We were weaving dreams in silence, suddenly the
veil was lifted.
By a hand of fire awakened, in a moment caught
and led
Upward to the heaven of heavens—through the
star-mists overhead
Flare and flaunt the monstrous highlands; on the
sapphire coast of night
Fall the ghostly froth and fringes of the ocean of
the light.
Many-colored shine the vapors: to the moon-eye far
away
'Tis the fairy ring of twilight, mid the spheres of
night and day,
Girdling with a rainbow cincture round the planet
where we go,
We and it together fleeting, poised upon the pearly
glow;
We and it and all together flashing through the
starry spaces
In a tempest dream of beauty lighting up the face
of faces.

Half our eyes behold the glory; half within the spirit's glow
Echoes of the noiseless revels and the will of Beauty go.
By a hand of fire uplifted—to her star-strewn palace brought,
To the mystic heart of beauty and the secret of her thought:
Here of yore the ancient Mother in the fire mists sank to rest,
And she built her dreams about her, rayed from out her burning breast:
Here the wild will woke within her lighting up her flying dreams,
Round and round the planets whirling break in woods and flowers and streams,
And the winds are shaken from them as the leaves from off the rose,
And the feet of earth go dancing in the way that beauty goes,
And the souls of earth are kindled by the incense of her breath
As her light alternate lures them through the gates of birth and death.
O'er the fields of space together following her flying traces,
In a radiant tumult thronging, suns and stars and myriad races
Mount the spirit spires of beauty, reaching onward to the day

When the Shepherd of the Ages draws his misty hordes away
Through the glimmering deeps to silence, and within the awful fold
Life and love and joy forever vanish as a tale is told,
Lost within the Mother's being. So the vision flamed and fled,
And before the glory fallen every other dream lay dead.

A. E.

THE TRAVELLERS

A strange procession passes still
Across the valley, up the hill,
Setting a fringe upon the day,
Where the path lies a little way
Along the bare and windy heights;—
A fringe that wavers all day long,
Uncertain as the Northern Lights
When days are short and frosts are strong.

Here at my window as I sit
Watching the changing figures flit,
I hear the fly upon the pane,
The sweet birds singing after rain,
But never any sound at all
From those mysterious travellers,
No voices harsh or musical
Upon that silent way of theirs.

They never turn or pause to rest,
But onward to the shining West,
Like some swart serpent, fold on fold,
The long procession still is rolled.
But where they go, or what they seek,
Unguessed beyond the mountain lies;

I see them slowly gain the peak,
And slowly vanish from my eyes.

Where the blue heavens touch the hill,—
Shade after shadow moving still.
Yet sometimes in my dreams I pass
With them across the meadow grass,
And up the purple mountain side,
Until the long bare ridge I gain,
And see before me, stretching wide
Between the hills, a quiet plain,

All beautiful with shady trees,
And gardens, where the drowsy bees
Make music in the ear of sleep.
I see a broad, blue river sweep
By banks where the wild roses dream,
And swans and water-lilies sway
With the slow rhythm of the stream
Above their shadows, white as they;

And where the trees most shady are,
A city, shining like a star.
The river laves her marble quays,
All marble are her palaces;
The white rose in her garden flowers,
And milk-white are the doves that fly
About the gleaming marble towers.
Then from my longing heart a cry

Breaks forth,—and all my dream is gone,
Shattered and lost and overthrown.

But still my heart with longing stirs
To join those silent travellers;
And still I watch them day by day,
That strange procession passing still
Silent upon its westward way
Across the valley, up the hill.

And in my heart full well I know
I, too, at last shall rise and go
To seek within the shining West
That city of eternal rest.

Duncan J. Robertson.

IMMORTALITY

I

When other beauty governs other lips,
  And snowdrops come to strange and happy springs,
When seas renewed bear yet unbuilded ships,
  And alien hearts know all familiar things,
When frosty nights bring comrades to enjoy
  Sweet hours at hearths where we no longer sit,
When Liverpool is one with dusty Troy,
  And London famed as Attica for wit. . . .
How shall it be with you, and you, and you,
  How with us all who have gone greatly here
In friendship, making some delight, some true
  Song in the dark, some story against fear?
Shall song still walk with love, and life be brave,
And we, who were all these, be but the grave?

II

No; lovers yet shall tell the nightingale
  Sometimes a song that we of old time made,
And gossips gathered at the twilight ale
  Shall say, "These two were friends," or, "Unafraid

"Of bitter thought were those because they loved
"Better than most." And sometimes shall be told
How one, who died in his young beauty, moved,
As Astrophel, those English hearts of old.
And the new seas shall take the new ships home
Telling how yet the Dymock orchards stand,
And you shall walk with Julius at Rome,
And Paul shall be my fellow in the strand;
There in the midst of all those words shall be
Our names, our ghosts, our immortality.

John Drinkwater.

SONNET

It may be that beyond our mortal view
In a great factory on the outer verge
Of outer heaven, a heavenly Demiurge
Through the long ages shapes the earth anew.
Perchance hereafter he shall raise his head
Having fulfilled his task, while all about
The lamps of the old Universe burn out
And daylight waxes in the darkened shed.
Then rising from his toil he shall fling wide
The Workshop doors, and quench the lights
that lurk
In windless corners, and his labour done,
Shall stand upon the threshold satisfied,
Beholding the new world, his handiwork,
All-glorious beneath the risen sun.

Roger Heath.

REFLECTIONS

How often have I gazed with upturned face
And wondered at the miracle of night,
That vast immeasurable vault of light,
And marvelled at the swift unending race
Of blazing suns and stars aloft in space,
Yet knew behind them all there watched a might,
A power which ordered and controlled their flight;
And even this small earth could mark and trace.

When I consider this infinity
A nameless terror clutches at my soul,
Thinking of one whose unperturbed eyes
These myriad, myriad stars of ours can see,
And knows them fragments of a mighty whole,
A little light in the eternal skies.

W. A. Lee.

RHAPSODY

As when trees are shrouded in December
Men recall the perfumes of the flower-time,
So we sing a life we half remember:—
How we heard in some primeval shower-time
Liquid song of rain upon blue rivers:
Dreamed on isles in windless oceans planted
Where a dim green twilight bird enchanted
Under domes of drooping leafage quivers:
How we climbed, on many a hidden planet,
Eagle-heights stirred by a starry breeze:
Watched by coffined kings in tombs of granite
Where the darkness hangs like boughs of trees,
Glimpsing in the reddening light of torches
Ghosts of sombre vaults and looming porches,
Cyclopean faces, giant knees:
How we anchored in a violet haven,
Seeking under light of unknown stars
Mountains paler than the moonlight, graven
Into shapes of pinnacles and scars:
Where our boat set all the lilies swinging
Sailed up rivers hushed and leafy-arboured
And, in caves of hanging blossom harboured,
Heard the sound of an immortal singing.

As when breathed upon, the ashen ember
Blossoms into fire again and fades,
So bright Junes flame up through our December
And at random whiles we half remember
Sudden gusts of an immortal singing,
Ancient visions of remote crusades.

Martin Armstrong.

BEAUTY

I sought for beauty in forgetfulness
Of the harsh days, the mean and bitter hours,
The eyes wherein a shrinking spirit cowers,
The broken hearts, the forms of drab distress;
I sought her in strange books where legends press
In rich profusion, in the scent of flowers,
Bird song and starlight, wooing the high powers
For sense and certainty of her caress.

I found her not. Immortally diffused,
No bloom or light or sound can prison her,
No drug of legend make her wholly mine;
She haunts the ruined hours, the lives abused,
Distils her silence in the city's stir,
And pours out sorrow as a golden wine.

William Kean Seymour.

THE SNARE

Far away and long ago
This trouble at my heart began:
Ere Eden perished like a flower,
Or Eve had shed her tears an hour,
Or Adam knew himself a man,
In every leaf of every tree
Beauty had set a snare for me.

Far away and long ago
Her loveliest song began to chime.
Bright Hector fell, and at the stroke
Ten thousand hearts like mine awoke
In every age and every clime.
She stood bestriding Time and Space
Amid the stars, and lit the rose
With scent and color, and she chose
My country for a dwelling place,
And set a snare in every tree
Awaiting me, awaiting me!

Edward Davison.

BARCAROLLE

Dark Hesper climbs the evening sky
  And sails grow dim on rosy seas
And golden in the west there lie
  The Isles of the Hesperides.

The Night across the still lagoon
  Floats in her purple gondola
And like a fairy ship the moon
  Sails, with a single Pilot-star.

The water laps the languid oar,
  Ripples and gurgles, croons and sings;
Low through the dusk a troubadour
  Murmurs his love to muted strings.

The clinging darkness wraps us round,
  More tender grows the fragrant breeze:
Shall not our own sweet isles be found
  The Isles of the Hesperides?

S. Matthewman.

IMMORTALITY

One star upon the desert of the sky,
  One song upon the silences of night,
  Upon the tossing of the stream, one light,
One moment in a blank eternity.

For, O my love, eternity is drear,
  And soon we both shall weary of it so,
That we shall turn and hide ourselves for fear
  In that sweet hour God gave us long ago.

We cannot wander from it very far,
  For down the long wild ways, it calls us home,
Red through the evening like a fallen star,
  A dim undying hearth for loves that roam.

I feel were I to meet you I might not
  Even know you in the street, nor you know me—
  You might look back and whisper, 'Who is she?'
And I might sigh at something half forgot.

But in our Moment I can kiss your face,
  Smiling and strong—unchanged by all the years;
And I can hold you there a little space,
  And you hold me—unchanged by all my tears.

And I can whisper to you of that night
  When our dark boat made moon-swept waters hiss.
  Your face was wet with spray, spray-white your kiss,
Your eyes were stars that I had set alight.

Dim planets hung above the trembling trees,
  The suck of water shook the misty air,
  The darkness showed you magic in my hair,
The darkness showed you rest upon my knees.

We saw two wandering stars fall through the sky—
  'Twas you and I, lost in the chilly haze,
  Apart, adrift, forsaken, but ablaze
With one short hour's eternal ecstasy.

And into our poor love of rags and tears
  The fire of life and deathless love rushed down,
Rushed the great love of this world's million years,
  Gave us the kingdom, set on us the crown—

Gave us all love of lovers since the morn
  Of love in the dim daybreak of the earth,
  Gave us all harmonies since music's birth,
Gave us all colours since the first red dawn—

Gave us the springtime with its changing tunes,
Gave us the mysteries of many Junes,
Gave us the stars, gave us the trackless sea,
Gave us each other to eternity.

Love may be gone, as you are gone, my dear,
  But our almighty moment cannot die—
It shall stand fast when the last crumbling sphere
  Shall crash out of the ruin of the sky.

When the last constellations faint and fall,
  When the last planets burst in fiery foam,
When all the winds have sunk asleep, when all
  The worn way-weary comets have come home—

When past and present and the future flee,
  My moment lives! and I shall hold you there.
It lives to be my immortality,
  An immortality which you shall share.

One star upon the desert of the sky,
  One song upon the silences of night,
  Upon the tossing of the stream, one light,
One moment in a blank eternity.

Sheila Kaye-Smith

TO MY MOTHER

At evening when the twilight curtains fall,
Before the lamps are lit within my room,
My memories hang bright upon the gloom,
Like ancient frescoes painted on the wall.

And I can hear the call of birds and bells
And shadowy sound of waves, and wind through leaves
And wind that rustles through the burnished sheaves,
And far off voices whispering farewells.

I dream again the joy I used to know
While straying by the sea that hardly sighed
A sorrow in my singing, as the tide
Crept up to clasp me, smiled, and let me go.

And I remember all the glad lost hours,
The racing of brown rabbits on the hill,
The winds that prowled around the lonely mill,
Laburnum laughter, music of the flowers.

The berries plucked with loitering delight,
Staining the dusk with purple, till the thought

Of starry little ghosts behind us caught
Our hearts and made us fearful of the night.

The London evenings huddled in the rain
Whose misty prisms shone with lamplight pale,
Making our hearts seem sinister and frail,
Fainting our thoughts with mystery and pain.

I have a world of memories to dream,
To touch with loving fingers as a sigh
Revives a little flame and lets it die.
Ah, were the days as lovely as they seem

Now that they look so peaceful lying dead?
And is it all the hope of Joy we have,
The broken trophies of the things she gave
And took away to give us dreams instead?

The things we love and lose before we find
The way to love them well enough and keep,
That now are woven on the looms of sleep,
That now are only music on the wind.

Iris Tree.

TO A DISTANT ONE

Through wild by-ways I come to you, my love,
Nor ask of those I meet the surest way,
What way I turn I cannot go astray
And miss you in my life. Though Fate may prove
A tardy guide she will not make delay
Leading me through strange seas and distant lands,
I'm coming still, though slowly, to your hands.
We'll meet one day.

There is so much to do, so little done,
In my life's space that I perforce did leave
Love at the moonlit-trysting place to grieve
Till fame and other little things were won.
I have missed much that I shall not retrieve,
Far will I wander yet with much to do.
Much will I spurn before I yet meet you,
So fair I can't deceive.

Your name is in the whisper of the woods
Like Beauty calling for a poet's song
To one whose harp has suffered many a wrong
In the lean hands of Pan. And when the broods
Of flower eyes waken all the streams along
In tender whiles, I feel most near to you:—
Oh, when we meet there shall be sun and blue
Strong as the spring is strong.

Francis Ledwidge.

WAITING

Every day you do not come
A little bit of summer dies,
A rose-leaf flutters from a rose;
With less expectant eyes,

Every day you do not come,
A blackbird from some lofty spray
Watches another sunset fade
And sings his heart away.

Every day you do not come
Some clinging tendril is untwined;
The sweetness of the heliotrope
Is wasted on the wind.

Every day you do not come
A little later wakes the dawn,
A little sooner steals the dusk
Across the shadowed lawn.

Helen E. Holland.

WOMAN'S SONG

No more upon my bosom rest thee,
Too often have my hands caressed thee,
  My lips thou knowest well, too well;
Lean to my heart no more thine ear
My spirit's living truth to hear—
  —It has no more to tell.

In what dark hour, in what strange night,
Burnt to the butt the candle's light
  That lit our room so long?
I do not know, I thought I knew
How love could be both sweet and true:
  I also thought it strong.

Where has the flame departed? Where,
Amid the empty wastes of air,
  Is that which dwelt with us?
Was it a fancy? Did we make
Only a show for dead love's sake,
  It being so piteous?

No more against my bosom press thee,
Seek no more that my hands caress thee,
  Leave the sad lips thou hast known so well;
If to my heart thou lean thine ear,
There grieving thou shalt only hear
  Vain murmuring of an empty shell.

Edward Shanks.

TO MY BELOVÈD DEAD

I

In the profound and dreadful calm of night,
Worn with the newness of my grief, I come
Dry-eyed, and fall beside you, spent and dumb,
Dreading the dawn, with all its aching light;

Dreading the day, and all it holds for me
Of restlessness and forms that come and go;
New things to do, new things to see and know,
That were not yet, when you were there to see;

And shut my eyes, and for a while pretend
That I can lean against you, feel your hand,
Hear your heart beat, and know you understand,
Though you are farther than the wide world's end.

Ah! My Belovèd, swiftly, silently,
Surely your kind, kind ghost shall comfort me.

II

It cannot be that you shall no more come
Radiant with laughter, holding hands for mine,
Seeking my soul for Love's most earnest sign,
Meeting my thought with eloquent thought and dumb.

It cannot be that I must look for you
There, where the Summer flames, and find you not;
Of splendid sunsets know you all forgot,
Nor find you in the rain, nor the sky's blue.

For here the lily all her sweetness yields,
And all my heart is open to the sun;
And, seeking peace in grief, the long day done,
I find it in the silver, moonlit fields.

Then, by the beauty of the world I know
That you are here, and will not let me go.

Ethel Ashton Edwards.

THE RETURN

Far, through the quiet night, my Loved One came;
He said: "I have come back to you awhile,"
And called me by a most belovèd name;
He held me in his arms, I saw him smile . . .
"We had too little time together, Love,
And so I have come back" . . . I held him close;
The inviolate night broke on us from above,
And sheltered us in darkness and repose.

I feared to break the silence, lest the spell
Of that great happiness were broken too.
We neither spoke: there was no word to tell
In language what we held so wholly true . . .

There came a gleam of silver from the lawn . . .
I woke . . . I lay alone . . . and it was Dawn.

Ethel Ashton Edwards.

THE TRYST

I

She will return, as surely as the morn:
Death cannot hold her, nor the grave immure,
Nor hope of saintly paradises lure
To leave her love upon the world forlorn.
But whispers on the early breezes borne
Will voice her gladness; she will keep her way
Across the stillness of the middle day,
And all her beauty by the night be worn.

Joy as of old in her melodious moods,
Who is made one with universal things,
Will be his stay. And if to him she brings
Her human sorrow in the rain, and broods
Over the autumn magic of the woods,
In such full griefs there is no room for pain,
But wonder and the touch of peace again,
And trysting in the haunted solitudes.

II

Ah would that he might know the gentle way
Death has with Love! Nor call his darling dead;
Nor grieve that all his dear delight is fled

In starry new forgetful paths to stray;
But in the precincts of the fretful day
And through the peopled darkness be aware
Of me, among the unseen watchers there.
All else is granted. This alone I pray.

The garden of his heart with sun and shower
I will besiege: my being shall renew
The bloom of spring in every avenue,
And move the languid air with a fresh power
Of love, and shake each wind-awakened flower
To murmur many a soft enchanted word
In falling petals. Surely they will be heard,
Nor his soul fail me at the trysting hour.

E. V. Rieu.

ELEGY

The wood is bare: a river-mist is steeping
The trees that winter's chill of life bereaves:
Only their stiffened boughs break silence, weeping
Over their fallen leaves;

That lie upon the dank earth brown and rotten,
Miry and matted in the soaking wet:
Forgotten with the spring, that is forgotten
By them that can forget.

Yet it was here we walked when ferns were springing,
And through the mossy bank shot bud and blade:—
Here found in summer, when the birds were singing,
A green and pleasant shade.

'Twas here we loved in sunnier days and greener;
And now, in this disconsolate decay,
I come to see her where I most have seen her,
And touch the happier day.

For on this path, at every turn and corner,
The fancy of her figure on me falls:
Yet walks she with the slow step of a mourner,
Nor hears my voice that calls.

So through my heart there winds a track of feeling,
A path of memory, that is all her own:
Whereto her phantom beauty ever stealing
Haunts the sad spot alone.

About her steps the trunks are bare, the branches
Drip heavy tears upon her downcast head;
And bleed from unseen wounds that no sun staunches,
For the year's sun is dead.

And dead leaves wrap the fruits that summer planted;
And birds that love the South have taken wing.
The wanderer, loitering o'er the scene enchanted,
Weeps, and despairs of spring.

Robert Bridges.

THE DARKLING THRUSH

I leant upon a coppice gate
  When Frost was spectre-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
  The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
  Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
  Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
  The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
  The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
  Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
  Seemed fervorless as I.

At once a voice arose among
  The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
  Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
  In blast-beruffled plume,

Had chosen thus to fling his soul
  Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carollings
  Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
  Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
  His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
  And I was unaware.

Thomas Hardy.

THE STARLING

A starling whistles from the chimney pot
And all my world, as by some magic spell,
Is touched to loveliness: now quite forgot
Are the drab streets; I see a dell
Where happy wild things play, the honey bees,
Rabbits with startled eyes and listening ears,
Scared by the smallest whisper of the breeze
That laughs among the grasses at their fears;
Blue butterflies, like scraps of the blue sky,
Flit to and fro, and with the singing stream
A merry water-wagtail hurries by.
O lovely ways, and are they but a dream!
Sweet feathered conjuror, must my senses wake!
Pipe on, lest this too tired heart should break.

E. Joyce Harrison.

ON THE WESTERN CLIFFS

Out of the windy waste
  Of waters rolling gray,
Homeward the red sails haste
  Across the bay.
Over the downs I see
  The summits black and sheer,
When evening on the lea
  Is pale and clear.

There as the twilight falls,
  The seabirds float and cry;
—Only the mountain walls
  Make faint reply;—
Or with broad wing decline
  Down to their rocky home,
Warm in the chilly brine,
  Nestled in foam.

Over the oozy weed
  The flying feet haste on,
Hither and thither speed
  Ere day be done.
For them the fry that dive
  Poise in their liquid bed,

They neither fear nor strive,
  Sleep and are fed.

Then comes the night, the end,
  What should their dying be?
Death steals, a silent friend,
  Out of the sea.
Under the rocky edge
  They close their languid eye,
While shrill from tuft and ledge
  Their brethren cry.

Or where the stranded wrack,
  Rimmed on the stunted grass,
Rattles so dry and black
  As the winds pass,
The draggled feather flies,
  The frail denuded bones
Bleach, and the sightless eyes,
  On the gray stones.

Under the weary hill
  The wandering footsteps cease;
He that must wander still
  Envies your peace.
Wasted by harsh events,
  Sighs to be large and free,
Mix with the elements,
  And breathe, and be.

Arthur Christopher Benson.

THE ROCK POOL

This is the sea. In these uneven walls
A wave lies prisoned. Far and far away
Outward to ocean, as the slow tide falls,
Her sisters through the capes that hold the bay
Dancing in lovely liberty recede.
Yet lovely in captivity she lies,
Filled with soft colours, where the wavering weed
Moves gently and discloses to our eyes
Blurred shining veins of rock and lucent shells
Under the light-shot water; and here repose
Small quiet fish and dimly glowing bells
Of sleeping sea-anemonies that close
Their tender fronds and will not now awake
Till on these rocks the waves returning break.

Edward Shanks.

THE ANCIENT MOTHER

Thou art the mother of all things, O Sea,
From out whose teeming, pulsing womb once crept
The life primordial, when green earth yet slept.
How shall we sing, we that are born of thee,
Thy age-old saga of maternity?
We are rebellious children: thou hast leapt
To snatch our lives again and we have wept
And cried to heaven of thy treachery.

Yet still thine ancient beauties must we praise:
The cries of birds in oceans many-isled,
The strange sea-gardens, where the pale weed sways;
The taste of salt on breezes undefiled,
And surf-artillery along the bays—
O mother-sea, I also am thy child!

Margaret S. Dangerfield.

SEA-MADNESS

I cannot stay in any inland place,
  The sea-song drowns the beating of my blood.
I find no joy in any woman's face,
  My sole desire is the sea's grey flood.
With eager arms I clasp the bitter wave
  That will not wait to quench my maddening fire;
But laughs,—and passing spurns her pleading slave
  Who burns unceasingly with sick desire.
Wave-buffeted and belled with glistening foam,
  Eyes blinded, and lips stinging from her kiss,
I stand, whose sea-born madness makes me roam
  Homeless where surging waters crash and hiss.
No power may cure this longing for the wave
'Till her cold bosom makes my restless grave.

Periwinkle Cotgrave.

THE VOICE OF THE WATERS

Where the Greyhound River windeth through a
loneliness so deep,
Scarce a wild fowl shakes the quiet that the purple
boglands keep,
Only God exults in silence over fields no man may
reap.

Where the silver wave with sweetness fed the tiny
lives of grass
I was bent above, my image mirrored in the fleeting
glass,
And a voice from out the water through my being
seemed to pass.

"Still above the waters brooding, spirit, in thy time-
less quest;
Was the glory of thine image trembling over east
and west
Not divine enough when mirrored in the morning
water's breast?"

With the sighing voice that murmured I was borne
to ages dim
Ere the void was lit by beauty breathed upon by
seraphim,

We were cradled there together folded in the peace
in Him.

One to be the master spirit, one to be the slave
awoke,
One to shape itself obedient to the fiery words we
spoke,
Flame and flood and stars and mountains from the
primal waters broke.

I was huddled in the heather when the vision failed
its light,
Still and blue and vast above me towered aloft the
solemn height,
Where the stars like dewdrops glistened on the
mountain slope of night.

A. E.

FIRE-FLIES

I

To-night I watch the fire-flies rise
  And shine along the air;
They float beneath the starry skies,
  As mystical and fair,
Over the hedge where dimly glows
The deep gold of the Persian rose.

I watch the fire-flies drift and float,
  Each is a dreamy flame,
Star-colored each, a starry mote,
  Like stars not all the same;
But whiter some, or faintly green.
Or warmest blue was ever seen.

They cross and cross and disappear,
  And then again they glow;
Still drifting faintly there and here,
  Still crossing to and fro,
As though in all their wandering
They wove a wide and shining thing.

II

O fire-flies, would I knew the weft
  You have the weaving of!

For, as I watch you move, bereft
  Of thought or will or love,
I fear, O listless flames, you weave
The fates of men who strive and grieve.

The web of life, the weft of dreams,
  You weave it ceaselessly;
A strange and filmy thing it seems,
  And made in mystery
Of wind and darkness threaded through
With light these heavens never knew.

O pale, mysterious, wandering fire,
  Born of the earth, alive
With the same breath that I respire,
  Who know and think and strive;
You circle round me, stranger far
Than any charm of any star!

III

Ah me, as faint as you, as slight,
  As hopelessly remote
As you, who still across the night
  Innumerably float,
Intangible as you, I see
The motives of our destiny.

For ah, no angel of the stars,
  No guardian of the soul,
Stoops down beyond the heavenly bars
  Our courses to control.
But filled and nourished with our breath
Are the dim hands that weave our death.

They weave with many threads our souls,
  A subtle-tinted thing,
So interwoven that none controls
  His own imagining,
For every strand with other strands
They twine and bind with viewless hands.

They weave the future of the past;
  Their mystic web is wrought
With dreams from which we woke at last,
  And many a secret thought;
For still they weave, howe'er we strive,
The web new-woven for none alive.

IV

And still the fire-flies come and go—
  Each is a dreamy flame—
Still palely drifting to and fro
  The very way they came—
As though, across the dark they wove
Fate and the shining web thereof.

Yet, even were I sure of it,
  I would not lift a hand
To break the threads that shine and flit—
  For, ah, I understand
Ruin, indeed, I well might leave
But a new web could never weave.

A. Mary F. Robinson.

THE HARE

Through the pale summer grass I stare
  At the blue dome of sky;
A soft, contented, couchant hare
  Hid in the grass am I.

All that I see a hare can see,
  All that I hear she hears,
The wind's wave falling ceaselessly,
  The trembling grassy spears:

The colored patchwork of the weald,
  Unto the world's blue edge,
Green field plaited with yellow field,
  Hedge woven with dark hedge:

And, on the other side, the sea
  Striped by the yellow grass,
Where to and fro continually
  Small busy creatures pass:

Beetles as bright as lustre beads,
  Ladybirds red as blood,
Green grasshoppers like little steeds
  Threading the tangled wood:

And butterflies upon the wind
  Blown past like withered leaves,
Graylings, and all the heathy kind,
  And flecked fritillaries—

Their cool wings flutter near my face
  Where cupped in grass I lie,
Domed with the blue and dazzling space
  Of fine cloud-ruffled sky.

I watch the ambling shadows pass,
  And bask without a care,
With sun and sky and summer grass
  As thoughtless as a hare.

Till from that blue and friendly dome
  There comes a sudden breath,
A shuddering breath out of a tomb,
  A messenger of death.

A sound, a smothering sound, that fills
  And fades, but comes again;
Bruising the gentle grassy hills
  With news of grief and pain.

Oh, then no summer do I see,
  Nor feel the summer air;
But think upon men's cruelty,
  And tremble like a hare.

Sylvia Lynd.

WOUNDS

The wounded bird sped on with shattered wing,
And gained the holt, and ran a little space,
Where briar and bracken twined a hiding-place;
There lay and wondered at the grievous thing.

With patient filmy eye he peeped, and heard
Big blood-drops oozing on the fallen leaf;
There hour by hour in uncomplaining grief
He watched with pain, but neither cried nor stirred.

The merry sportsmen tramped contented home,
He heard their happy laughter die away;—
Across the stubble by the covert-side
His merry comrades called at eventide;
They breathed the fragrant air, alert and gay,
And he was sad because his hour was come.

Arthur Christopher Benson.

THE LAMENT OF THE MOLE-CATCHER

An old, sad man who catches moles
  Went lonely down the lane—
All lily-green were the lanes and knolls
  But sorrow numbed his brain.
He paid no heed to flower or weed
  As he went his lonely way.
No note he heard from any bird
  That sang that sad spring day.

"I trapp'd the moles for forty years,
  Who could not see the sky,
I reckoned not blind blood or tears,
  And the Lord has seen them die.
For forty years I've sought to slay
The small, the dumb, the blind,
But now the Lord has made me pay,
  And I am like their kind.
I cannot see or lane or hill,
  Or flower or bird or moon;
Lest life shall lay me lower still,
  O Lord—come take it soon."

Osbert Sitwell.

YESTERNIGHT

Death has come since yesternight,
I met her on the mountainside,
Her face was haggard, drawn and white,
Her robes were ragged and stripped of pride.

I met her near the farthest fold;
I gripped my crook to bar her way,
Then shrank before her eyes' strange cold.
She passed into the twilight grey.

I watched her from the path below
Climb the rugged mountainside
I know not whither, but I know
Someone in the darkness died.

Elfyn Williams David.

THE RETURN

Slow to the precincts of the earthly mind
With many a backward glance returns the soul,
And dimly mourns for what it leaves behind,
And has no pleasure in the distant goal—

Doubtful, as is a rower from the land
When midway on the mere he stays his oar,
And dreams that through the gloom he sees the hand
Of one who beckons from the dwindling shore.

E. V. Rieu.

HAPPY WAS I

When the dead man opens his eyes
On bluer rivers and clearer skies,
On brighter flowers in fields more green
Than any the sun he loved has seen . . .

What will he say seeing Beauty there
Fairer than ever and yet less fair
Because the hunger and hope no more
Prey at his heart as they did before?

"Happy was I till the perfect tree
Spread bough and foliage over me
And shook to the grass beside my foot
The lovely, pined-for, ideal fruit.

"Would there were hope of the grave again
Whose mystery baffled the minds of men:
Better the apples my own trees bore . . .
I would that the worm were at the core!"

Edward Davison.

THE GHOST

They told her softly I was dead,
  That she should leave me now and rest,
But still she knelt beside the bed,
  Her hair lay heavy on my breast.

I heard her voice against my ear:
  "Not death, not death, but only sleep!"
She did not dream that I could hear,
  Or should be hurt to see her weep.

For I was dead and could not speak,
  For I was dead and could not stir;
Her hand lay up against my cheek,
  And yet I might not comfort her.

So presently she left her dead,
  They soothed her till she ate and slept;
I was a ghost, and on the bed
  There lay the thing for which she wept.

I was a ghost, and had my place
  No more with her humanity;
I looked on what had been my face,
  And thought it wore a smile for me.

But death was dark and very cold,
  And I was lonely and afraid
Without a human hand to hold
  In this new life that death had made.

Till as I stood and shivered there,
  Thrust out from my humanity,
There came a great warm rush of air
  Blowing the darkness back from me:

And there beyond the dark was light,
  And through the light there ran the way:
I left my body in the night,
  My ghost went out into the day.

Vera Larminie.

WINTER DUSK

Dark frost was in the air without,
The dusk was still with cold and gloom,
When less than even a shadow came
And stood within the room.

But of the three around the fire,
None turned a questioning head to look,
Still read a clear voice, on and on,
Still stooped they o'er their book.

The children watched their mother's eyes
Moving on softly line to line;
It seemed to listen too—that shade,
Yet made no outward sign.

The fire-flames crooned a tiny song,
No cold wind moved the wintry tree;
The children both in Faërie dreamed
Beside their mother's knee.

And nearer yet that spirit drew
Above that heedless one, intent
Only on what the simple words
Of her small story meant.

No voiceless sorrow grieved her mind,
No memory her bosom stirred,
Nor dreamed she, as she read to two,
'Twas surely three who heard.

Yet when, the story done, she smiled
From face to face, serene and clear,
A love, half dread, sprang up, as she
Leaned close and drew them near.

Walter de la Mare.

REVENANTS DES ENFANTS

Softly, on little feet that make no sound,
With laughter that one does not hear, they tread
Upon the primroses that star the ground,
Latticed by shade from branches overhead,
Swaying in moonlight; but their footsteps make
A twinkling like the raindrops on the lake.

The shy things that love silence and the night
Are fearless at their coming; as they pass,
Neither the nightingale nor owl take flight,
So gentle is each footfall on the grass;
They are a part of silence, and a part
Of sweetness sprung from tears hid in the heart.

Their faces we may not caress, nor hear
The little bodies that are soft as dreams;
Their life is rounded by another sphere,
They are as frail as shadows seen in streams:
A ripple might efface them, but they keep
Shadows of their existence in our sleep.

Frederic Manning.

HAUNTED

No sound there is within the little room:
The firelight glows; strange shadows crouch . . .
and some
Are caught upon the window blind, and come
And go, as folks pass in the outer gloom.
So still it is in here; but in the street
Shrill cries of children; footsteps hurrying past;
Patter of tiny raindrops, thick and fast;
A little gust of wind, sobbing and fleet.
The lamp burns low, no breeze is stirring here,
Time has no place within these dim, still walls
That have known Sorrow, and a living Fear.
I am alone, but there is One who calls:
I am alone, but *She* my vigil keeps,
That Unseen Other One, who weeps . . . and
weeps.

Molly A. Paley.

GHOST HUNTERS

I thought I heard small voices go
  A-weeping through the night,
And then a pattering of feet
  In panic-stricken flight.

I thought I heard the moonlight rent
  By laughter shrill and cries
That went with echo through the woods
  And crashing down the skies.

But when I leant into the night
  And listened, still and tense
There was no panic in the air
  Nor any turbulence.

A silence lay on field and wood;
  A silence, breathing deep.
Beneath a canopy of stars
  The world was fast asleep.

Violet Le Maistre.

FAERIE

Under the edge of midnight
  While my love is far away,
A wind from the world of faerie
  Blows between day and day.

And wandering thoughts possess me,
  Such as no wise man knows,
Death and a thousand accidents,
  And high impossible woes.

Whether now in her pastime
  She turned a little, sighed
With the heaviness of breathing,
  And even in turning died:

Or whether some cloud covers
  The lobes of the conscious brain
And all that she knew aforetime
  She shall never know again,

But her friends shall bring her to me,
  Bewildered and afraid
Lest a stranger's hand should touch her,
  A shrinking alien maid,—

Yet such distress in patience
  And faith an end may find,
And a more fantastic peril
  Moves in my dreaming mind:

None knows how deep within us
  Lies hid a secret flaw,
Where spins the mad world ever
  On the very edge of law.

Under the chance that rules us
  Anarchic terrors stir,
Lest what to me has happened
  Has never happened to her.

First love in our first meeting,
  Changed eyes, and bridal vows,
The incredible years together
  Lived in a single house,

The kisses born of custom
  That are sweeter and stranger still
Than any clasp of passion,
  And the shaping of one will,—

Was it some wraith deceived me,
  And lives she still apart
In her father's house contented,
  With an unawakened heart?

Now at this striking midnight
  Through the chink between day and day,

Has a wind from the world of faerie
  Blown all my life away?

Here am I now left naked
  Of the vapour that was she:
While the true maid 'midst her kindred
  Has never thought of me?

For ten long years together
  Can a thing be and not be,
Till it ceases to be for ever,—
  And has this chanced to me?

Charles Williams.

SHE WHOM I LOVE WILL SIT APART

She whom I love will sit apart,
  And they whom love makes wise
May know the beauty in her heart
  By the beauty in her eyes.

Thoughts that in quietness confute
  The noisy world are hers,
Like music in a listening lute
  Whose strings no finger stirs.

And in her eyes the shadows move,
  Not glad nor sad, but strange
With those unchanging dreams that prove
  The littleness of change.

Gerald Gould.

ABSENT AND PRESENT

Through morning meads we broke the dew,
  And heard the hidden skylark sing,
Oh, goodly sound, when, having you,
  I wanted for no other thing!
And ah, how plainly cried his tongue—
"All grief is old, all joy is young!"

Through moving mists around the wood
  The daylight came in grey disguise,
A pallid ghost. Then as we stood,
  I marked the hunger of your eyes;
And all your thoughts had flown away,
Back to the East and far Cathay!

For ever in your veins must run
  The rover's blood, so strange to me!
You heard the call; you saw the sun
  Rise red across the Indian sea;
So sundered stood we, side by side—
Two fates which seas and lands divide!

And now alone through twilit mead,
  I break the dew: yet not alone,

Still, as the skylark sings, I read
  As fair a meaning in its tone;
For now he sings of you, my dear,
"The near is far, the far is near!"

Laurence Housman.

THE NIGHT WIND

The night wind taps on my window,
  But you knocked on my heart's closed door.
    I shall always know
    When the soft winds blow,
  And my clipped wings are trying to soar—
That out of the cool night shadows
  You knocked on my heart's closed door.

The moonlight falls through my window,
  And it silvers my chamber floor;
    When its drifting thread
    Creeps under my bed,
  Then I see you again as of yore—
You stood in the throbbing stillness
  And knocked at my heart's closed door.

The darkness beats on my window
  And it leans on my heart's closed door;
    When its wings I hear,
    I shall always fear
  That you came: but return nevermore—
Pass on through the dusky silence
  That curtains my heart's closed door.
    You pass on your way,
    Deaf when I say—
  "Wait! I have opened the door."

Edith M. Walker.

LOGIE KIRK

O Logie Kirk amang the braes,
I'm thinking o' the merry days
Afore I trod thae weary ways
That led me far frae Logie!

Fine do I mind when I was young
Abune thy graves the mavis sung
An' ilka birdie had a tongue
To ca' me back to Logie.

O Logie Kirk, tho' aye the same
The burn sings ae remembered name,
There's ne'er a voice to cry "Come hame
To bonnie Bess at Logie!"

Far, far awa' the years decline
That took the lassie wha was mine
An' laid her sleepin' lang, lang syne
Amang the braes at Logie.

Violet Jacob.

DUNSFORT BOG

To Cahirmone I walked one day
  Away across the glen
To where the busy stonechats nest
  And foxes make their den.

The plovers wheeled above my head
  As I went whistling by,
And merry larks with hovering wings
  Rose up against the sky.

And loud I whistled as I went
  Along the heathered hill,
Until I came to Cahirmone;
  Then sudden I stood still.

For there, the lovelight in her face,
  I saw my lover stand,
But ah! 'twas not myself she saw,
  Nor me she clasped by hand.

Then quickly hushed the bunting's song,
  While dark clouds filled the sky,
And dropped their tears upon the stones
  That strewed the ground near by.

And back I turned from Cahirmone
  Away across the glen
By Dunsfort Bog where, it is said,
  Lie many long-dead men.

And wet and cold the mist that blew,
  And sad the curlew's cry,
As I passed by the still, black pools
  Where wild things go to die.

Miriam A. Coppinger.

THE WATERMILL

I'll rise at midnight and I'll rove
Up the hill and down the drove
  That leads to the old unnoticed mill,
And think of one I used to love:
There stooping to the hunching wall
  I'll stare into the rush of stars
Or bubbles that the waterfall
  Brings forth and breaks in ceaseless wars.

The shelving hills have made a form
Where the mill holdings shelter warm,
  And here I came with one I loved
To watch the seething millions swarm.
But long ago she grew a ghost
  Through walking with me every day;
Even when her beauty burned me most
  She to a spectre dimmed away—

Until though cheeks all morning-bright
And black eyes gleaming life's delight
  And singing voice dwelt in my sense,
Herself paled on my inward sight.
She grew one whom deep waters glassed.
  Then in dismay I hid from her,

And lone by talking brooks at last
I found a Love still lovelier.

O lost in tortured days of France!
Yet still the moment comes like chance
Born in the stirring midnight's sigh
Or in the wild wet sunset's glance:
And how I know not but this stream
Still sounds like vision's voice, and still
I watch with Love the bubbles gleam,
I walk with Love beside the mill.

The heavens are thralled with cloud, yet gray,
Half-moonlight swims the field till day,
The stubbled fields, the bleaching woods;—
Even this bleak hour was stolen away.
By this shy water falling low
And calling low the whole night through
And calling back the long ago
And richest world I ever knew.

The hop-kiln fingers cobweb-white
With discord dim turned left and right,
And when the wind was south and small
The sea's far whisper drowsed the night;
Scarce more than mantling ivy's voice
That in the tumbling water trailed.
Love's spirit called me to rejoice
When she to nothingness had paled.

For Love the daffodils shone here
In grass the greenest of the year,
Daffodils seemed the sunset lights

And silver birches budded clear:
And all from east to west there strode
  Great shafted clouds in argent air,
The shining chariot-wheels of God,
  And still Love's moment sees them there.

Edmund Blunden.

THE WEATHER-VANE

O Steeple-Cock, stoop down to me
And tell me what you see afar!
A sail that flickers on the sea
No bigger than a star.

O make your fledge a beacon, fowl,
And let your wings be lanterns both!
Afar I see the tempest scowl
And all the waves are wroth.

Look well again, good steeple-cock,
And can you see her lantern-spark?
Nay, now she runs upon a rock,
And founders in the dark.

O steeple-cock, say one is saved,
One only lad, that shall not drown!
I saw a sudden hand that waved
But once, and then went down.

Fly, steeple-cock, with my true pledge,
And say I love him, ere he die!
Too heavy is my golden fledge,
Good lass! I cannot fly.

Wilfrid Thorley.

THE DREAMER

Tread softly by, shapes of remembered care,
Nor stir night's gentle fingers from her eyes.
She sleeps, and open to the vaulted skies
The Earth sleeps with her: land and ocean share
One dream; and on the darkened roads of air
Her spirit mounts, where timid rays and few
Steal down between the late and early dew
From starry lamps by many a windy stair.

She moves in music through a lustrous land
That needs no moon by night nor any star,
Moves where the sources of the morning are,
And doors that open to the dreamer's hand,
And greetings dear as on the desert sand
The voice of running waters. Wake her not:
Those melodies, scarce heard, are soon forgot,
And all the long-drawn leagues too swiftly spanned.

E. V. Rieu.

HAUNTED

Dear Eyes that smile to me across the years
How we have drifted, drifted! since the day
When through an arrowy rain of April tears
I met you down the arching woodland way!
Under the swaying, wet wild-apple boughs
You leaned and lingered, white as petals blown,
And heart to heart, between our passionate vows
I held you, all my own!

Now I am old and tired, and Love's strong flame
That lit our lives to ecstasy divine
Burns faint and low; yet, speaking soft your name
When twilight falls, I still can call you mine!
For, dim against the dying firelight's glow,
A gentle wraith, through mists of Memory
As through the arrowy rain of long ago
You come again to me!

Esther Raworth.

THE SHADOW

She loitered on the high road, she hastened in the lane,
At every turn before her the shadow turned again.

She lingered in the valley, she climbed across the hill,
But all the way beside her the shadow flitted still.

She came into the homestead, she entered by the door,
But close against the lintel the shadow went before.

She stayed beside the hearthstone, she took the wonted place,
But from the faces round her the shadow hid her face.

She lay beneath the yew trees, the earth upon her breast,
But on the grass above her the shadow lay at rest.

Vera Larminie.

THE RE-BIRTH OF THE SOUL

(Written on the recent death of my aged mother in Spring)

Now what have I to do with Death?
And what has Death to do with me?
The winds are sweet with vernal breath.
The birds are singing in the tree.

And yet she droops her hands—and dies,
My mother who ordained my birth;
And 'tis the mating-time of earth,
Of linnet-song and cuckoo cries;

When every wing is in the air,
And every seedling seeks to rise:
And plants uplift their banners fair
Before my sad unsleeping eyes.

Ah! Winter claims her for his own,
For very tired and old she lies.
Outside no wrecking north winds moan,
Only within Life's Autumn dies.

Take comfort! Spring is even here;
It struggles from this husk of pain.
Time turns the seed-rind dull and sere
That youth may leap to life again.

Herbert E. Palmer.

IN SPRING

Wistful in loveliness beyond all words
Are April woods when spring has crowned the hills;
Heart-ache it is to hear the song of birds
At twilight in the time of daffodils.

In the bright orchard when the wind was sweet
I stood beneath the pear-tree mossed with green,
A shower of blossoms drifting to my feet—
Never such shining wonder have I seen!

Oh! beautiful the days beyond all words,
Gentle the nights, when Spring has crossed the hills!
Why then these tears to hear the song of birds
At twilight in the time of daffodils?

Molly Young.

ARCADY IN ENGLAND

I met some children in a wood,
A happy and tumultuous rout
That came with many a wanton shout
And darted hither and about
(As in a stream the fickle trout),
To ease their pagan lustihood.

And in their midst they led along
A goat with wreaths about his neck
That they had taken pains to deck
To join that bacchanalian throng.

And one of them was garlanded
With strands of wild convolvulus
About his ringlets riotous,
And carried rowan-berries red.

And one, the eldest of the band,
Whose life was seven summers glad,
Was all in flowered muslin clad,
And naked dancing feet she had
To lead the sylvan saraband.
With hazel skin and coral bead
A gipsy dryad of the mead

She seemed; she led the gay stampede
With fruited branches in her hand.

For all were bearing autumn fruit;
Some, apples on the loaded bough,
And pears that on the orchard's brow
With damask-plums were hanging now;
And much they had of woodland loot,
Of berries black and berries blue,
Of fir-cones, and of medlars too;
And one, who bore no plunder, blew
On reeds like an Arcadian flute.

They passed, and still I stood knee-deep
In thymy grass to watch their train.
They wound along the wooded lane
And crossed a streamlet with a leap,
And as I saw them once again
They passed a shepherd and his sheep.

And you might think, I made this song
For joy of song as I strode along
One day between the Kentish shaws,
Slashing at scarlet hips and haws.
But thinking so, you nothing know
Of children taken unawares,
Of tinkers' tents among the gorse,
The poor lean goat, the hobbled horse,
And painted vans for country fairs.

V. Sackville-West.

FINE EVENING

To-night the sky is like a rose
  Above the little town,
A petal fallen from a rose
  The chalk-pit on the down.

The ancient vane is gilt again,
  And every roof is warm,
And brightly burns a window-pane
  In some far distant farm.

The gentle hill, the gentle sky
  Lie close as close-shut lips,
Softly and very secretly
  Day towards darkness slips.

And every tree its arms puts out
  To clasp the passing light,
And every bud puts up its mouth
  To kiss the day good-night—

The elm-trees all on tip-toe stand
  Day's going to behold,
Like little children hand-in-hand
  With hair of misty gold—

So slowly that she seems to stay,
  So slowly does she pass!
But trace we may the steps of day
  Translucent in the grass.

To-night her going is as kind
  As if that she stood still,
And we, by climbing, noon should find,
  Full noon, behind the hill.

Sylvia Lynd.

THE LANE

There is a little lane that lies
  Far from the haunts of men;
And O! the heart within me cries
  To tread its ways again.

Low is its voice and very sweet,
  —The young wind whispering,
The lilt of song where waters meet,
  The call of birds in Spring.

Soft are its hands and very kind
  Outstretched to welcome me,
—Pale honeysuckle boughs entwined
  With heart-leaved bryony.

Bright are its eyes and very clear;
  Starred in the wayside grass
The golden-hearted daisies peer
  All smiling as I pass.

Pure is its heart and very wise,
  Far from the haunts of men;
And O! the heart within me cries
  To hear it beat again.

H. Ross.

REMEMBRANCE

O places I have seen upon the earth,
  Your silence is not virginal any more,
For one still wanders there whose mortal birth
  Was mine. And now, gaze bent on buried lore,

A child, a youth, a man—O is it I?—
  In silence stands by every lake and tree,
Or leans lost poring face where flickering by
  The bright stream moves on to another sea.

And all is changed, the shining fields, the host
  Of shapes who were myself years long ago.
'Tis these who love! And I am but a ghost
  Exiled from their sole light and jealous glow.

Ah no, it was not I who, laughing there,
  Walked with the crowd, and there, in solitude,
Wandered a summer's day through windless air,
  In a once-visited far-northern wood.

It was not I from morn till noon who went
  The white road's length to the white noisy town
So many years ago. That light is spent,
  And he who saw it, long since fallen down.

And he no less, the child who, walking grave,
  Saw beauty of tiny weed, of moss and stone;
And all his comrades, diffident and brave—
  They each have perished, silent and alone.

I can no more have speech with them, nor know
  The light which lights them. Vaster than the sea,
The yawning distances o'er which we go
  On our frail paths of sundering destiny.

Edwin Muir.

THE RETURN

All day the land in golden sunshine lay,
All day a happy people to and fro
Moved through the quiet summer fields; all day
I wandered with bowed head and footstep slow,
A stranger in the well-remembered place,
Where Time has left not one familiar face
I knew long years ago.

By marsh lands golden with bog asphodel,
I saw the fitful plover wheel and scream;
The soft winds swayed the foxglove's purple bell;
The iris trembled by the whispering stream;
Gazing on those blue hills which know not change,
All the dead years seemed fallen dim and strange
Unreal as a dream.

Unchanged as in my dreams lay the fair land,—
The laughter-loving lips, the eager feet,
The hands that struck warm welcome to my hand,
The hearts that at my coming higher beat,
Have long been cold in death; no glad surprise
Wakens for me in any living eyes,
That once made life so sweet.

Slowly the day drew down the golden west;
The purple shadows lengthened on the plain,
Yet I unresting through a world at rest,
Went silent with my memory and my pain;
Then for a little space, across the years
To me, bowed down with time and worn with tears,
My friends came back again.

By many a spot where summer could not last,
In other days for all our joy too long,
They came about me from the shadowy past,
As last I saw them, young and gay and strong;
And she, my heart, came fair as in the days
When at her coming all the radiant ways
Thrilled into happy song.

Ah me! ah me! on such a summer night
In silence here together, she and I
Stood watching the pale, lingering fringe of light
Go slowly creeping round the northern sky.
Ah, love, if all the weary years could give
But one sweet hour of that sweet night to live
With thee—and then to die!

The old sweet fragrance fills the summer air,
The same light lingers on the northern sea,
Still, as of old, the silent land lies fair
Beneath the silent stars, the melody
Of moving waters still is on the shore,
And I am here again—but nevermore
Will she come back to me.

Duncan J. Robertson.

GOD'S HILLS

In our hill country of the North
The rainy skies are soft and grey,
And rank on rank the clouds go forth,
And rain in orderly array
Treads the mysterious flanks of hills
That stood before our race began,
And still shall stand when Sorrow spills
Her last tear on the dust of man.

There shall the mists in beauty break,
And clinging tendrils finely drawn
A rose and silver glory make
About the silent feet of dawn;
Till Gable clears his iron sides
And Bowfell's wrinkled front appears,
And Scawfell's clustered might derides
The menace of the marching years.

The tall men of that noble land
Who share such high companionship,
Are scorners of the feeble hand,
Contemners of the faltering lip.
When all the ancient truths depart
In every strait that men confess,

Stands in the stubborn Cumbrian heart
  The spirit of that steadfastness.

In quiet valleys of the hills
  The humble grey stone crosses lie,
And all day long the curlew shrills,
  And all day long the wind goes by.
But on some stifling alien plain
  The flesh of Cumbrian men is thrust
In shallow pits, and cries in vain
  To mingle with its kindred dust.

Yet those make death a little thing
  Who know the settled works of God,
Winds that heard Latin watchwords ring
  From ramparts where the Romans trod,
Stars that beheld the last King's crown
  Flash in the steel grey mountain tarn,
And ghylls that cut the live rock down
  Before kings ruled in Ispahan.

And when the sun at even dips
  And Sabbath bells are sad and sweet,
When some wan Cumbrian mother's lips
  Pray for the son they shall not greet;
As falls that sudden dew of grace
  Which makes for her the riddle plain,
The South wind blows to our own place,
  And we shall see the hills again.

William Noel Hodgson.

THE WILD GEESE

"O tell me what was on yer road, ye roarin' norlan' Wind,
As ye cam blawin' frae the land that's niver frae my mind?
My feet they traivel England, but I'm dee'in for the north."
"My man, I heard the siller tides rin up the Firth o' Forth."

"Aye, Wind, I ken them weel eneuch, and fine they fa' an' rise,
And fain I'd feel the creepin' mist on yonder shore that lies,
But tell me, ere ye passed them by, what saw ye on the way?"
"My man, I rocked the rovin' gulls that sail abune the Tay."

"But saw ye naething, leein' Wind, afore ye cam' to Fife?
There's muckle lyin' 'yont the Tay that's mair to me nor life."

"My man, I swept the Angus braes ye hae'na trod
for years."
"O Wind, forgi'e a hameless loon that canna see for
tears!"

"And far abune the Angus straths I saw the wild
geese flee,
A lang, lang skein o' beatin' wings, wi' their heids
towards the sea,
And aye their cryin' voices trailed ahint them on
the air—"
"O Wind, hae maircy, haud yer whisht, for I daurna
listen mair!"

Violet Jacob.

THE QUIET HOUSE

'Tis very quiet in the house
  Without the turbulent little flock.
The sweet hours, quiet as a mouse,
  Steal slowly round the ticking clock.
We gather honey while we may
When children are at school all day.

So peaceful with the song of birds,
  The water lapping on the shore;
But evening brings the flocks and herds
  And happy children home once more.
Blessed the hour in sun or rain
That brings the children home again.

'Tis very quiet in the house
  Where children come not home at all.
The day goes stiller than a mouse;
  Gulls and the sea-winds cry and call:
And two old shadows by the flame
Talk of the days when children came.

Oh, when the children are away,
  The house is very still and sweet.
But if no evening, gold or gray,
  Brought the quick kiss, the flying feet,
Heavily would the silence press,
The loneliness, the loneliness!

Katherine Tynan.

LONELINESS

When graven is the tale of man's distress
Above the tomb of all our humankind,
Let there be told the torment of the mind
Of him who knows the spirit's loneliness.
Death ever changing, changeless comes to all,
And love brings joy, all strangely wrought with pain,
That he who greatly dares may greatly gain;
But loneliness, whose cold imperious call
Rings through the world to bid his chosen come,
Stands jealous as some pagan god of old,
Demanding sacrifice of grief and tears.
Who hears his summons evermore is dumb,
Who knows him lord, mates agony untold
And trails a chain of bondage through the years.

N. J. Kessler.

IN SEPTEMBER

Still are the meadowlands, and still
Ripens the upland corn,
And over the brown gradual hill
The moon has dipped a horn.

The voices of the dear unknown
With silent hearts now call,
My rose of youth is overblown
And trembles to the fall.

My song forsakes me like the birds
That leave the rain and grey,
I hear the music of the words
My lute can never say.

Francis Ledwidge.

TUMULT

Through the storm and the desolate night there was far away heard
The cry of a plover that wailed like a soul without sight;
And a horror of darkness enveloped the land and bestirred
Through the storm and the desolate night.

As the wind in the trees goeth wistfully forth to the dark,
Like a querulous voice ineffectually pleading for ease
Must the Spirit be poured into sound to which no one will hark—
As the wind in the trees?

As the call of a bird in the night is the voice that is I;—
And hasten, O Dawn, and illumine me, Send me thy light,
Lest I pass as a gust in the trees, lest I utterly die
As the call of a bird in the night.

C. B. Tracey.

THE DARK WAY

Rougher than death the road I choose
Yet shall my feet not walk astray,
Though dark, my way I shall not lose
For this way is the darkest way.

Set but a limit to the loss
And something shall at last abide,
The blood-stained beams that formed the cross,
The thorns that crowned the crucified;

But who shall lose all things in One,
Shut out from Heaven and the Pit
Shall lose the darkness and the sun,
The finite and the infinite;

And who shall see in one small flower
The chariots and the thrones of might
Shall be in peril from that hour
Of blindness and the endless night;

And who shall hear in one short name
Apocalyptic thunders seven
His heart shall flicker like a flame
'Twixt Hell's gates and the gates of Heaven.

For I have seen your body's grace,
The miracle of the flowering rod,
And in the beauty of your face
The glory of the face of God,

And I have heard the thunderous roll
Clamored from heights of prophecy,
Your splendid name, and from my soul
Uprose the clouds of minstrelsy.

Now I have chosen in the dark
The desolate way to walk alone
Yet strive to keep alive one spark
Of your known grace and grace unknown;

And when I leave you lest my love
Should seal your spirit's ark with clay
Spread your bright wings, O shining Dove—
But my way is the darkest way.

Joseph Mary Plunkett.

PERSONALITY

As one who goes between high garden walls,
Along a road that never has an end,
With still the empty way behind, in front,
Which he must pace for evermore alone—
So, even so, is Life to every soul,
Walled in with barriers that no Love can break.

And yet! ah me! how often would we break
Through every fence, and overleap the walls,
And link ourselves to some beloved soul,
Hearing her answering voice until the end,
Going her chosen way, no more alone,
But happy comrades, seeing Heaven in front.

But, ah, the barrier's high! and still my front
I dash against the stones in vain, nor break
A passage through, but still remain alone:
Hearing sometimes across the garden walls
A voice the wind brings over, or an end
Of song that sinks like dew into my soul.

Since others sing, let me forget, my Soul,
How dreary-long the road goes on in front,
And tow'rds how flat, inevitable an end.
Come, let me look for daisies, let me break
The gillyflowers that shelter in the walls—
But ah! it is so sad to be alone!

For ever, irremediably alone,
Not only I or thou, but every soul,
Each cased and fastened with invisible walls.
Shall we go mad with it? or bear a front
Of desperate courage doomed to fail and break?
Or trudge in sullen patience till the end?

Ah, hope of every heart, there is an end!
An end when each shall be no more alone,
But either dead, or strong enough to break
This prisoning self and find that larger Soul
(Neither of thee nor me) enthroned in front
Of Time, beyond the world's remotest walls!

I trust the end and sing within my walls,
Sing all alone, to bid some listening soul
Wait till the day break, watch for me in front!

A. Mary F. Robinson.

SURSUM COR!

Lament no more, my heart, lament no more,
Though all these clouds have covered up the light,
And thou, so far from shore,
Art baffled in mid flight;
Still proudly as in joy through sorrow soar!
As the wild swan,
Voyaging over dark and rising seas,
Into the stormy air adventures on
With wide unfaltering wings, the way he bore
When blue the water laughed beneath the breeze
And morning round the radiant beaches shone.
So thou through all this pain
Endure, my heart, whither thy course was bound;
Though never may the longed-for goal be found,
Thy steadfast will maintain.
Thou must not fail, for nothing yet hath failed
Which was to thee most dear and most adored;
Still glorious is Love, thy only lord,
Truth still is true, and sweetness still is sweet:
The high stars have not changed, nor the sun paled.
Still warmly, O my heart, and bravely beat.
Remember not how lovely was delight,
How piteous is pain,
Keep, keep thy passionate flight,
Nor find thy voyage vain,
Yea, till thou break, my heart, all meaner quest disdain.

Laurence Binyon.

EVENING

When little lights in little ports come out,
Quivering down through water with the stars,
And all the fishing fleet of slender spars
Range at their moorings, veer with tide about;

When race of wind is stilled, and sails are furled,
And underneath our single riding-light
The curve of black-ribbed deck gleams palely white,
And slumbrous waters pool a slumbrous world,

—Then, and then only, have I thought how sweet
Old age might sink upon a windy youth,
Quiet beneath the riding-light of truth,
Weathered through storms, and gracious in retreat.

V. Sackville-West.

ON GROWING OLD

Be with me, Beauty, for the fire is dying;
My dog and I are old, too old for roving.
Man, whose young passion sets the spindrift flying,
Is soon too lame to march, too cold for loving.
I take the book and gather to the fire,
Turning old yellow leaves; minute by minute
The clock ticks to my heart. A withered wire,
Moves a thin ghost of music in the spinet.
I cannot sail your seas, I cannot wander
Your cornland, nor your hill-land, nor your valleys
Ever again, nor share the battle yonder
Where the young knight the broken squadron rallies.
Only stay quiet while my mind remembers
The beauty of fire from the beauty of embers.

Beauty, have pity! for the strong have power,
The rich their wealth, the beautiful their grace,
Summer of man its sunlight and its flower,
Spring-time of man all April in a face.
Only, as in the jostling in the Strand,
Where the mob thrusts or loiters or is loud.
The beggar with the saucer in his hand
Asks only a penny from the passing crowd,
So, from this glittering world with all its fashion.

Its fire, and play of men, its stir, its march,
Let me have wisdom, Beauty, wisdom and passion,
Bread to the soul, rain where the summers parch.
Give me but these, and, though the darkness close,
Even the night will blossom as the rose.

John Masefield.

THE LAST MEMORY

When I am old, and think of the old days,
And warm my hands before a little blaze,
Having forgotten love, hope, fear, desire,
I shall see, smiling out of the pale fire.
One face, mysterious and exquisite;
And I shall gaze and ponder over it,
Wondering, was it Leonardo wrought
That stealthy ardency, where passionate thought
Burns inward, a revealing flame, and glows
To the last ecstasy, which is repose?
Was it Bronzino, those Borghese eyes?
And, musing thus among my memories,
O unforgotten! you will come to seem,
As pictures do, remembered, some old dream.
And I shall think of you as something strange
And beautiful, and full of helpless change,
Which I beheld and carried in my heart;
But you I loved will have become a part
Of the eternal mystery, and love
Like a dim pain; and I shall bend above
My little fire, and shiver, being cold,
When you are no more young, and I am old.

Arthur Symons.

THE OLD WOMAN

Oh! I am old, and sad, and sleepy-eyed,
But I have known the dreams none ever knew.
The stars have kissed my face, the dews my feet;
But now the shadows come into my eyes,
And I have half forgotten fairy ways.

But I will go and sit and dream of them,
And dream of all the fairies on the hill;
Until I see them dancing on the grass;
Until I hear them laughing with the wind,
And singing to me of a place apart
Where cold white water gleams beneath pale skies,
And mystic fir trees stand upon the hill.

I hear the light wind murmur in the grass;
And in the trees I see strange gleaming lights.
I hear a murmur in the rising wind—

"Oh! you are old, three times too old for us;
But we will make you young and fair of face.
Oh! fair and pale is water at the dawn,
But fairest are the people of the hill.

"Oh! you are going, going; you are gone
To where the fairies dance upon the hill.

Then you will dance with us in lonely woods,
And you will sing beside the silent lake
Until the wind has lost its song; until
The mountains fall, and this old world is dead.
Come with us, old, old woman, come away.
Oh! sad, and grey, and sleepy-headed—come!"

Marjorie Holmes.

THE COUNSEL OF GILGAMESH

"Gilgamesh, why dost thou wander around?
Life, which thou seekest, thou canst not find."

Epic of Gilgamesh.

Why wander round, Gilgamesh?
The sun that set to-night
Shall climb the sky to-morrow
And bake the world with light.
Throughout the undying ages
The sun shall set and rise
As it hath set and risen
From dim eternities.

Why wander round, Gilgamesh?
Why vainly wander round?
What canst thou find, O seeker,
Which hath not long been found?
What canst thou know, O scholar,
Which hath not long been known?
What canst thou have, O spoiler,
Which dead men did not own?

The camel of the desert,
The wild ape of the wood,

Tread the white bones of heroes
  Who in thy place once stood;
Like thee, they felt the sunshine,
  Like thee, they loved the day,
Like thee, they sought and suffered—
  And thou shalt be as they.

And other men, Gilgamesh,
  Shall seek what thou dost seek,
And to their youth and ardour
  Thy rotting bones shall speak.
They will not heed thy counsel,
  They too will wander round,
And waste their years in seeking
  That which hath long been found.

Why wander round, Gilgamesh?
  Why vainly wander round?
What canst thou find, O seeker,
  Which hath not long been found?
What canst thou know, O scholar,
  Which dead men did not know?

And this was asked in Nineveh
  Thousands of years ago.

Sheila Kaye-Smith.

A THOUGHT IN TWO MOODS

I saw it—pink and white—revealed
  Upon the white and green;
The white and green was a daisied field,
  The pink and white Ethleen.

And as I looked it seemed in kind
  That difference they had none;
The two fair bodiments combined
  As varied miens of one.

A sense that, in some mouldering year,
  As one they both would lie,
Made me move quickly on to her
  To pass the pale thought by.

She laughed and said: "Out there, to me,
  You looked so weather-browned,
And brown in clothes, you seemed to be
  Made of the dusty ground!"

Thomas Hardy.

DISILLUSION

I stood in Heaven at last and gravely scanned
Sad angel hosts, their fabled glory sped;
One placed a halo round my warrior head,
And cast beneath his feet the shining brand
Wherewith this arm had striven to purge a land
Sin-sick and vile, and sorrow-visited.
And now, alas! another in my stead
Shall build the radiant city I had planned,
And win the high renown for which I fought!
I for eternity must lie and drowse
In halcyon fields, my soul ignobly sure,
Crowned with a misted circlet angel-wrought . . .
For *him* the tilt, the fight, the great carouse,
While I the turgid peace of Heaven endure.

Winifred N. James.

LOVE OF LIFE

I cannot leave the splendor of the sky
Or the dear whispers of the summer grass,
The little, secret shadow of wings that pass
Above moon-daisies, or the wistful sigh
Of woods at dusk. Oh! Heaven is all too high
When on the earth the infinite colors start
And honeysuckle rushes to my heart . . .
Leave me my human pain: I cannot die!

Beauty and Love in little moonlit ways
Of silence; June, when roses flash to birth;
Youth and the love-time of the summer days . . .
Oh! Heaven is cold and Death comes all too soon.
I cannot die when roses laugh in June.
And You—and You—are lovely on the earth.

C. A. Renshaw.

OUT OF WEAKNESS

To-day, as far as eye can see,
  Or thought can multiply the sight,
In tangled croft, on upland lea,
  A message flashed along the light
Has worked strange marvels underground,
  And stirred a million sleeping cells,
The rose has hopes of being crowned;
  The foxglove dreams of purple bells;

No tiny life that blindly strives,
  But thinks the impulse all his own,
Nor dreams that countless other lives
  Like him are groping, each alone;
What dizzy sweetness, when the rain
  Has wept her fill of laden showers,
To peep across the teeming plain,
  Through miles of upward-springing flowers!

The brown seed bursts his armoured cap,
  And slips a white-veined arm between;
White juicy stalks, a touch would snap,
  And twisted horns of sleekest green
Now shift and turn from side to side,
  And fevered drink the stealing rain,

As children fret at sermon-tide,
When roses kiss the leaded pane.

The tender, the resistless grace,
That stirs the hopes of sleeping flowers,
Could shake yon fortress to her base,
And splinter those imperial towers;
Concentred, bound, obedient,
The soul that lifts those dreaming lids
Could mock old Ram'ses' monument,
And pile a thousand pyramids.

Arthur Christopher Benson.

HORSES

Those lumbering horses in the steady plough,
On the bare field—I wonder why, just now,
They seemed so terrible, so wild and strange,
Like magic power on the stony grange.

Perhaps some childish hour has come again,
When I watched fearful, through the blackening
rain,
Their hooves like pistons in an ancient mill
Move up and down, yet seem as standing still.

Their conquering hooves which trod the stubble
down
Were ritual which turned the field to brown,
And their great hulks were seraphim of gold,
Or mute ecstatic monsters on the mould.

And oh the rapture when, one furrow done,
They marched broad-breasted to the sinking sun!
The light flowed off their bossy sides in flakes;
The furrows rolled behind like struggling snakes.

But when at dusk with steaming nostrils home
They came, they seemed gigantic in the gloam,

And warm and glowing with mysterious fire,
Which lit their smouldering bodies in the mire.

Their eyes as brilliant and as wide as night
Gleamed with a cruel apocalyptic sight.
Their manes the leaping ire of the wind
Lifted with rage invisible and blind.

Ah now it fades! it fades! and I must pine
Again for that dread country crystalline,
Where the blank field and the still-standing tree
Were bright and fearful presences to me.

Edwin Muir.

THE SEED SHOP

Here in a quiet and dusty room they lie,
Faded as crumbled stone or shifting sand,
Forlorn as ashes, shrivelled, scentless, dry—
Meadows and gardens running through my hand.

Dead that shall quicken at the call of Spring,
Sleepers to stir beneath June's magic kiss,
Though birds pass over, unremembering,
And no bee seeks here roses that were his.

In this brown husk a dale of hawthorn dreams,
A cedar in this narrow cell is thrust
That will drink deeply of a century's streams,
These lilies shall make summer on my dust.

Here in their safe and simple house of death,
Sealed in their shells a million roses leap;
Here I can blow a garden with my breath,
And in my hand a forest lies asleep.

Muriel Stuart.

THE GIANT PUFFBALL

From what sad star I know not, but I found
Myself new-born below the coppice rail,
No bigger than the dewdrops and as round,
In a soft sward no cattle might assail.

And so I gathered mightiness and grew
With this one dream kindling in me, that I
Should never cease from conquering light and dew
Till my white splendor touched the trembling sky.

A century of blue and stilly light
Bowed down before me, the dew came again,
The moon my sibyl worshipped through the night,
The sun returned and long abode; but then

Hoarse drooping darkness hung me with a shroud
And switched at me with shrivelled leaves in scorn.
Red morning stole beneath a grinning cloud,
And suddenly clambering over dyke and thorn

A half-moon host of churls with flags and sticks
Hallooed and hurtled up the partridge brood,

And Death clapped hands from all the echoing
thicks,
And trampling envy spied me where I stood;

Who haled me tired and quaking, hid me by,
And came again after an age of cold,
And hung me in the prison-house adry
From the great crossbeam. Here defiled and cold

I perish through unnumbered hours, I swoon,
Hacked with harsh knives to staunch a child's
torn hand;
And all my hopes must with my body soon
Be but as crouching dust and wind-blown sand.

Edmund Blunden.

THE SOULS IN PRISON

I passed beyond the barrier of the tomb
  Into a cheerless land
Where all was dead, as when the winter gloom
  Touches with icy hand
The verdure of the earth's congealing womb
  And makes the rivers stand.

It was a realm of banishèd delight;
  (Nor nightingale nor lark
To hail the day or close the eye of night—)
  A silence grim and stark,
As when eclipse hides sun or moon from sight
  And all the land is dark.

A lurid twilight, as when sullen ground
  Or apprehensive tree
Waits till the rumble of the thunder sound
  Foretells a wrath to be.
So loomed the heavy stillness, and around
  Stretched a black, angry sea.

Nor sight nor sound was on that tideless shore,
  Nor any that made moan,
And where I would, I wandered evermore
  (My will was all mine own).

And never, never had I felt before
So utterly alone.

And then the agony of a silent voice
Beat throbbing on my brain,
"Lo! I am with thee, comrade of thy choice,
For happiness or pain:
Rejoice with me!" And at the word "Rejoice!"
The blood froze in each vein.

"Here is thy portion, where a place is given
For thee and me to dwell.—
And I am of thy making: hast thou striven
To mould me ill or well?
For in Remembrance wilt thou find thy Heaven
Or thine abiding Hell.

"Remove the threads that hold my veil in place
(Threads from the web, Despair).
O, fellow prisoner, look upon my face
And tell me I am fair.
I am the spirit of forgotten days,
Ghost of the things that were.

"Come, from my brow the covering withdraw,
And claim me here for thine."—
The throbbing ceased: the veil I loosed in awe
That face to unconfine.
It fell—I shrieked and fled—oh! God, I saw
The face—and that was mine.

Robert Burness.

THE SWORD OF SURPRISE

Sunder me from my bones, O sword of God,
Till they stand stark and strange as do the trees;
That I whose heart goes up with the soaring woods
May marvel as much as these.

Sunder me from my blood that in the dark
I hear that red ancestral river run,
Like branching buried floods that find the sea
But never see the sun.

Give me miraculous eyes to see my eyes,
Those rolling mirrors made alive in me,
Terrible crystal more incredible
Than all the things they see.

Sunder me from my soul, that I may see
The sins like streaming wounds, the life's brave
beat;
Till I shall save myself, as I would save
A stranger in the street.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton.

THE HAPPY TREE

There was a bright and happy tree;
  The wind with music laced its boughs;
Thither across the houseless sea
  Came singing birds to house.

Men grudged the tree its happy eves,
  Its happy dawns of eager sound;
So all that crowd and tower of leaves
  They levelled with the ground.

They made an upright of the stem,
  A cross-piece of a bough they made:
No shadow of their deed on them
  The fallen branches laid.

But blithely, since the year was young,
  When they a fitting hill did find,
There on the happy tree they hung
  The Saviour of mankind.

Gerald Gould.

THE CAPTIVE LION

Thou that in fury with thy knotted tail
Hast made this iron floor thy beaten drum;
That now in silence walks thy little space—
Like a sea-captain—careless what may come:

What power has brought your majesty to this,
Who gave those eyes their dull and sleepy look;
Who took the lightning out, and from thy throat
The thunder when the whole wide forest shook?

It was that man who went again, alone,
Into thy forest dark—Lord, he was brave!
That man a fly has killed, whose bones are left
Unburied till an earthquake digs his grave.

W. H. Davies.

A CHANGE OF VIEW

They cut the trees, they dug the mains,
They trampled all the meadow way;
Left not a blade of daisied grass
To lay cool hands upon the day.

A cry floats in the stifled air,
The anguish of some wild, dumb thing;
In muted misery caged and caught,
While the green earth yet glows with Spring.

Now red bricks flaunt their insolence
Like tawdry women of the town;
Leering with cheap impertinence,
Tricked out to please in garish gown.

And where was once blue space of Heaven,
New-painted, horrid windows glare;
Making a mock of beauty gone,
Like empty eyes, that stare and stare.

S. Marguerite Goode.

THE STRANGER

Two dismal lines of bricked monotony,
A straggling weedy growth of chimney-pots,
A crazy thoroughfare, with little clots
And pools of oozy slime; no greenery,
And here no happy flowers shalt thou see;
No summer fruits, no sun-burnt apricots;
Save these, these withered frail forget-me-nots,
The little stunted babes of Poverty.

There came one walking down this silent street
Whose head with many cruel thorns was crowned,
In his right hand he held outstretched a wreath.
And where he walked with naked bleeding feet
There was no voice of birds, nor any sound,
And by his smile I knew that he was Death.

W. A. Lee.

RONDEL OF LONDON

To-day I spake with souls that journeyed by.
Here in the street they touched me as they passed.
Sorrow and Hope and Terror flying fast,
Life soon to bud, or, withering, soon to die.

And many more with troubled, speechless eye
Into my heart their timeless question cast.
To-day I spake with souls that journeyed by.
Here in the street they touched me as they passed.

The spires consumed in sunset, ceaselessly
The traffic surged with sob and trumpet blast.
Dusty, ensnared, immortal, driven fast
They raised their faces to the evening sky.—
To-day I spake with souls that journeyed by.

Lucy Lyttelton.

ON A HOUSE BEING PULLED DOWN

Against the sky the house uplifts
A skeleton, whence paper-drifts
A tattered testimony bear
That men lived there.

There they in fierce embrace were sown
And there they strove and grieved alone,
Till, gaping-mouthed and sightless-eyed,
Alone they died.

Upon each old enkindled grate
Looking, I seem to violate
Some hour of bitterness lived through
That no man knew.

I shrink as one that unawares
Has chanced upon a soul that bares
A nakedness, whereon may pry
Each passer-by.

J. Slingsby Roberts.

POINTS OF VIEW

The Caveman looked at the Forest
And knew that it was good:
Many kinds of trees grew there
And each had different wood.

Oak, that was tough and would not yield,
With branches stiff and stub;
Ash that would rive and make good stones
For hunting spear or club.

Holly, milk-white and bitter-hard,
That keenest edge would turn;
Willow one could twist like rope;
Pine that was good to burn.

Elder and hawthorn, bending yew,
Frow elm and bark-grained beech.
Every kind of tree he knew
And had a use for each.

The Caveman looked at the Forest
And knew what harbored there,
What fowls and beasts were good to eat,
Or had good skins to wear.

He knew each furred and feathered thing
That still in greenwood goes,
The mammoths and great hornèd beasts
That earth no longer knows—

The Caveman looked at the Forest
And trembled as he stood:
For gods and demons moved within
The dim mysterious wood:

God of tall tree and god of brake,
God of bush and brier;
The Caveman knew and feared them all
And shivered by his fire—

The Caveman looked at the Forest
Mysterious dim and high—
And many uncouth things he saw;
But naught so queer as I.

As I, who at the forest
Gaze hard, nor see the wood:
I see the Caveman by his cave,
I stand where once he stood.

I see the Caveman by his cave,
Finding his soul in prayer.
I see the Caveman by his cave,
Who never saw me there.

I see the Caveman by his cave,
I see the years between:

The dim mysterious teeming years
Where always Man has been.

I see the Caveman by his cave
As at the wood he peers;
I see the devils and the gods
Of twice ten thousand years—

A dazed bewildered thing I stand
Confused by memories—
Who scarcely can tell oak from ash,
Nor see the wood—for trees.

Kenneth H. Ashley.

QUOD SEMPER

CHILD

What wind is this across the roofs so softly makes his way,
That hardly makes the wires to sing, or soaring smoke to sway?

WIND

I am a weary southern wind that blows the livelong day
Over the stones of Babylon,
Babylon, Babylon,
The ruined walls of Babylon, all fallen in decay.

Oh, I have blown o'er Babylon when royal was her state,
When fifty men in gold and steel kept watch at every gate,
When merchant-men and boys and maids thronged early by and late
Under the gates of Babylon,
Babylon, Babylon,
The marble gates of Babylon, when Babylon was great.

CHILD

Good weary wind, a little while pray let your course
be stayed,
And tell me of the talk they held and what the
people said,
The funny folk of Babylon before that they were
dead,
That walked abroad in Babylon,
Babylon, Babylon,
Before the towers of Babylon along the ground
were laid.

WIND

The folk that walked in Babylon, they talked of
wind and rain,
Of ladies' looks, of learned books, of merchants'
loss and gain,
How such-an-one loved such-a-maid that loved him
not again
(For maids were fair in Babylon,
Babylon, Babylon),
Also the poor in Babylon of hunger did complain.

CHILD

But this is what the people say as on their way they
go,
Under my window in the street, I heard them down
below.

What other should men talk about five thousand
years ago?
For men they were in Babylon,
Babylon, Babylon,
That now are dust in Babylon I scatter to-and-fro.

Lucy Lyttelton.

THE SPHINX

Ere days were days upon the earth
The Lord Almighty laid His hand.
I rose an everlasting hill,
And round my feet I felt the sand.
I felt upon my sightless brows
The child-winds leaning in their play,
Felt the first ripple of the Nile
Slip through my stones its seaward way.

Some came and shaped me brows and breast.
They gave me hearing, lips and eyes.
I heard the clanging of their gongs,
Smelt savor of their sacrifice.
I saw the kings in golden prows
Row with the flood to crown or bride,
I heard the wailing when they came
Back to the tomb, against the tide.

There passed a word between the winds.
They stirred the plains beyond the West.
The sands rose high behind my head,
The sands surged up against my breast.
The two waves meeting on my brows,
I waited, hidden in my place,

Till man remembered me again
And swept the sand from off my face.

Now Nile is far, and knows me not,
The desert sands remorseless rise,
My head is battered by the men
That used to make me sacrifice.
I lift my smitten brows and wait.
Men pass as prints of summer rain.
Nile will remember and return
To flow before my feet again.

Lucy Lyttelton.

WAR SONG OF THE SARACENS

We are they who come faster than fate: we are
they who ride early or late:
We storm at your ivory gate: Pale Kings of the
Sunset, beware!
Not on silk nor on samite we lie, not in curtained
solemnity die
Among women who chatter and cry, and children
who mumble a prayer.
But we sleep by the ropes of the camp, and we rise
with a shout, and we tramp
With the sun or the moon for a lamp, and the spray
of the wind in our hair.

From the lands where the elephants are, to the forts
of Merou and Balghar,
Our steel we have brought and our star to shine on
the ruins of Rum.
We have marched from the Indus to Spain, and by
God we will go there again;
We have stood on the shore of the plain where the
Waters of Destiny boom.
A mart of destruction we made at Jalula where men
were afraid,

For death was a difficult trade, and the sword was
a broker of doom;

And the Spear was a Desert Physician who cured
not a few of ambition,
And drave not a few to perdition with medicine
bitter and strong:
And the shield was a grief to the fool and as bright
as a desolate pool,
And as straight as the rock of Stamboul when their
cavalry thundered along:
For the coward was drowned with the brave when
our battle sheered up like a wave,
And the dead to the desert we gave, and the glory to
God in our song.

James Elroy Flecker.

THE MARCH

I heard a voice that cried, "Make way for those
who died!"
And all the coloured crowd like ghosts at morning
fled;
And down the waiting road, rank after rank there
strode
In mute and measured march a hundred thousand
dead.

A hundred thousand dead, with firm and noiseless
tread,
All shadowy-grey yet solid, with faces grey and
ghast,
And by the house they went, and all their brows
were bent
Straight forward; and they passed, and passed, and
passed, and passed.

But O there came a place, and O there came a face,
That clenched my heart to see it, and sudden turned
my way;
And in the Face that turned I saw two eyes that
burned,
Never-forgotten eyes, and they had things to say.

Like desolate stars they shone one moment, and
were gone
And I sank down and put my arms across my head,
And felt them moving past, nor looked to see the
last,
In steady silent march, our hundred thousand dead.

J. C. Squire.

A FALLEN SOLDIER

Hope held his hand and ran with him together.
Despair, the coward, at their coming fled.
Like a young ram, he shook his hornèd head,
And broke away from his restraining tether.
He loved the sea, he loved the cleansing flame;
No woman yet, his heart was all too young;
Over the plain of life his heart was flung,
Seeking for jeopardies that he might tame.
He cloaked his faith with laughter, but his faith
Was certain, as his confidence was gay,
And laughing went he, till on his last day
His hands stretched out to life were clasped by death.

V. Sackville-West.

ELEGY

(For J. N., died of wounds, October, 1916)

So you are dead. We lived three months together,
  But in these years how absence can divide!
We did not meet again. I wonder whether
  You thought of me at all before you died.

There in that whirl of unaccustomed faces,
  Strange, friendless, ill, I found in you a friend—
And then at last in these divided places,
  For you in France and here for me the end.

For friendship's memory was short and faithless
  And time went by that will not come again,
And you are dead of wounds and I am scatheless
  Save as my heart has sorrowed for my slain.

I wonder whether you were long in dying,
  Where, in what trench and under what dim star,
With drawn face on the clayey bottom lying,
  While still the untiring guns cried out afar.

I might have been with you, I might have seen you
  Reel to the shot with blank and staring eye,

I might have held you up. . . . I might have been
you
And lain instead of you where now you lie.

Here in our quietude strange fancy presses,
Dark thoughts of woe upon the empty brain,
And fills the streets and the pleasant wildernesses
With forms of death and ugly shapes of pain.

You are long dead. A year is nearly over,
But still your voice leaps out again amid
The tangled memories that lie and cover
With countless trails what then we said and did.

And still in waking dreams I sit and ponder
Pleasures that were and, as my working brain
Deeper in revery will stray and wander,
I think that I shall meet with you again

And make my plans and half arrange the meeting,
And half think out the words that will be said
After the first brief, careless, pleasant greeting . . .
Then suddenly I remember you are dead.

Edward Shanks.

TO GERMANY

You are blind like us. Your hurt no man designed,
And no man claimed the conquest of your land.
But, gropers both through fields of thought confined,
We stumble and we do not understand.
You only saw your future bigly planned,
And we, the tapering paths of our own mind,
And in each other's dearest ways we stand,
And hiss and hate, and the blind fight the blind.
When it is peace, then we may view again
With new-won eyes each other's truer form,
And wonder. Grown more loving-kind and warm,
We'll grasp firm hands and laugh at the old pain,
When it is peace. But, until peace, the storm,
The darkness, and the thunder and the rain.

Charles Hamilton Sorley.

ALIEN ENEMIES

(The German mother speaks to the English mother)

On the cold frontier-line of death
I won my man-child blood and breath:
At a great price, in gulfs of night,
Purchased the morning for his sight,
And in a silence big with fear
Fore-wrought the musics he should hear.

And you?—ah, who should know but I
The wings of death that beat so nigh,
The deathly dark, the deathly dews,
The soul that will not yet refuse,
And all you risked, and all you paid,
When out of you your son was made?

Your son and mine in love were bred,
Your son and mine in hate are dead,
Yet never hated, never knew
The sense of what they had to do,
But perished, brother slain by brother,
Who might as well have loved each other.
The happy hands, too good to put

To the red business of the brute;
The candid eyes that death's release
Found peopled with my dreams of peace;
The hope beneath the heart that grew—
Ah, who should know them if not you?

Dear mother of a murdered son,
Ours is the end by us begun!
Ours is the strength the guns called up,
And ours it is to drink the cup
Of childless days, of childless years,
Salt with the taste of blood and tears.

Dear murdered mother!—still to die
The women's regiments go by:
No music of the march for them,
And for their souls no requiem,
When, 'mid the screaming of the guns,
The mothers perish in their sons.

And we are foes, or so they tell me—
But in the wonder that befell me,
When, solitary soldier, I
Fought for the life so soon to die—
When out of night I brought, I won,
My morning-star, my little son—
When at the utter risk and cost
I gained the solace I have lost—

When underneath my opening eyes
Lay that which now all altered lies—

When to my warm and passionate breast
I held the limbs now cold in rest —
I knew one peace that shall not end,
And every mother for my friend.

Gerald Gould.

PIERROT AT THE WAR

The leaden years have dragged themselves away;
  The blossoms of the world lie all dashed down
And flattened by the hurricane of death:
The roses fallen, and their fragrant breath
  Has passed beyond our senses—and we drown
Our tragic thoughts; confine them to the day.

Pierrot was happy here two years ago,
  Singing through all the summer-scented hours,
Dancing throughout the warm moon-haunted night.
Swan-like his floating sleeves, so long and white,
  Sailed the blue waters of the dusk. Wan flowers,
Like moons, perfumed the crystal valley far below.

But now these moonlit sleeves lie on the ground,
  Trampled and torn from many a deadly fight.
With fingers clenched, and face a mask of stone,
He gazes at the sky—left all alone—
  Grimacing under every rising light:
His body waits the peace his soul has found.

Osbert Sitwell.

White founts falling in the Courts of the sun,
And the Soldan of Byzantium is smiling as they run;
There is laughter like the fountains in the face of all men feared,
It stirs the forest darkness, the darkness of his beard,
It curls the blood-red crescent, the crescent of his lips,
For the inmost sea of all the earth is shaken with his ships.
They have dared the white republics up the capes of Italy,
They have dashed the Adriatic round the Lion of the Sea,
And the Pope has cast his arms abroad for agony and loss,
And called the kings of Christendom for swords about the Cross.
The cold queen of England is looking in the glass;
The shadow of the Valois is yawning at the Mass;

From evening isles fantastical rings faint the
Spanish gun,
And the Lord upon the Golden Horn is laughing in
the sun.

Dim drums throbbing, in the hills half heard,
Where only on a nameless throne a crownless prince
has stirred,
Where, risen from a doubtful seat and half attainted
stall,
The last Knight of Europe takes weapons from the
wall,
The last and lingering troubadour to whom no bird
has sung,
That once went singing southward when all the
world was young.
In that enormous silence, tiny and unafraid,
Comes up along a winding road the noise of the
Crusade.
Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far,
Don John of Austria is going to the war,
Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold
In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold,
Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the
cannon, and he comes.
Don John laughing in the brave beard curled,
Spurning of his stirrups like the thrones of all the
world,
Holding his head up for a flag of all the free.
Love-light of Spain—hurrah!

Death-light of Africa!
Don John of Austria
Is riding to the sea.

Mahound is his Paradise above the evening star.
(*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)
He moves a mighty turban on the timeless houri's knees,
His turban that is woven of the sunsets and the seas.
He shakes the peacock gardens as he rises from his ease,
And he strides among the tree-tops and is taller than the trees,
And his voice through all the garden is a thunder sent to bring
Black Azrael and Ariel and Ammon on the wing.
Giants and the Genii,
Multiplex of wing and eye,
Whose strong obedience broke the sky
When Solomon was king.

They rush in red and purple from the red clouds of the morn,
From temples where the yellow gods shut up their eyes in scorn;
They rise in green robes roaring from the green hells of the sea
Where fallen skies and evil hues and eyeless creatures be;
On them the sea-valves cluster and the grey sea-forests curl,

Splashed with a splendid sickness, the sickness of the pearl;
They swell in sapphire smoke out of the blue cracks of the ground,—
They gather and they wonder and give worship to Mahound.
And he saith, "Break up the mountains where the hermit-folk can hide,
And sift the red and silver sands lest bone of saint abide,
And chase the Giaours flying night and day, not giving rest,
For that which was our trouble comes again out of the west.
We have set the seal of Solomon on all things under sun,
Of knowledge and of sorrow and endurance of things done,
But a noise is in the mountains, in the mountains, and I know
The voice that shook our palaces—four hundred years ago:
It is he that saith not 'Kismet'; it is he that knows not Fate;
It is Richard, it is Raymond, it is Godfrey at the gate!
It is he whose loss is laughter when he counts the wager worth,
Put down your feet upon him, that our peace be on the earth."
For he heard guns groaning, and he heard guns jar,

(*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)
Sudden and still—hurrah!
Bolt from Iberia!
Don John of Austria
Is gone by Alcalar.

St. Michael's on his mountain in the sea-roads of the north
(*Don John of Austria is girt and going forth.*)
Where the grey seas glitter and the sharp tides shift
And the sea-folk labor and the red sails lift.
He shakes his lance of iron and he claps his wings of stone;
The noise is gone through Normandy; the noise is gone alone;
The North is full of tangled things and texts and aching eyes
And dead is all the innocence of anger and surprise,
And Christian killeth Christian in a narrow dusty room,
And Christian dreadeth Christ that hath a newer face of doom,
And Christian hateth Mary that God kissed in Galilee,
But Don John of Austria is riding to the sea.
Don John calling through the blast and the eclipse,
Crying with the trumpet, with the trumpet of his lips,
Trumpet that sayeth *ha!*
Domino gloria!

Don John of Austria
Is shouting to the ships.

King Philip's in his closet with the Fleece about his neck
(*Don John of Austria is armed upon the deck.*)
The walls are hung with velvet that is black and soft as sin,
And little dwarfs creep out of it and little dwarfs creep in.
He holds a crystal phial that has colors like the moon,
He touches, and it tingles, and he trembles very soon,
And his face is as a fungus of a leprous white and grey,
Like plants in the high houses that are shuttered from the day,
And death is in the phial and the end of noble work,
But Don John of Austria has fired upon the Turk.
Don John's hunting and his hounds have bayed—
Booms away past Italy the rumor of his raid.
Gun upon gun, ha! ha!
Gun upon gun, hurrah!
Don John of Austria
Has loosed the cannonade.

The Pope was in his chapel before day or battle broke,
(*Don John of Austria is hidden in the smoke.*)

The hidden room in man's house where God sits all
the year,
The secret window whence the world looks small
and very dear.
He sees as in a mirror on the monstrous twilight sea
The crescent of his cruel ships whose name is
mystery;
They fling great shadows foe-wards, making Cross
and Castle dark,
They veil the plumèd lions on the galleys of St.
Mark;
And above the ships are palaces of brown, black-
bearded chiefs,
And below the ships are prisons where, with multi-
tudinous griefs,
Christian captives sick and sunless, all a laboring
race repines
Like a race in sunken cities, like a nation in the
mines.
They are lost like slaves that sweat, and in the skies
of morning hung
The stairways of the tallest gods when tyranny was
young.
They are countless, voiceless, hopeless as those
fallen or fleeing on
Before the high Kings' horses in the granite of
Babylon.
And many a one grows witless in his quiet room in
hell
Where a yellow face looks inward through the
lattice of his cell,

And he finds his God forgotten, and he seeks no more a sign—
(*But Don John of Austria has burst the battle line!*)
Don John pounding from the slaughter-painted poop,
Purpling all the ocean like a bloody pirate's sloop,
Scarlet running over on the silvers and the golds,
Breaking of the hatches up and bursting of the holds,
Thronging of the thousands up that labor under sea,
White for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for liberty.
Vivat Hispania!
Domino Gloria!
Don John of Austria
Has set his people free!

Cervantes on his galley sets the sword back in the sheath
(*Don John of Austria rides honored with a wreath.*)
And he sees across a weary land a straggling road in Spain,
Up which a lean and foolish knight forever rides in vain,
And he smiles, but not as Sultans smile, and settles back the blade . . .
(*But Don John of Austria rides home from the Crusade.*)

Gilbert Keith Chesterton.

THE HAMMERS

Noise of hammers once I heard,
Many hammers, busy hammers,
Beating, shaping, night and day,
Shaping, beating dust and clay
To a palace; saw it reared;
Saw the hammers laid away.

And I listened, and I heard
Hammers beating, night and day,
In the palace newly reared,
Beating it to dust and clay:
Other hammers, muffled hammers,
Silent hammers of decay.

Ralph Hodgson.

ALTER EGO

Who is it that I drag about;
This carping ever present thing,
Who splits my purpose, breeding doubt?
Is he my subject or my king?
Body and soul we well may be,
But which am 'I' and which is 'he'?

Some day, they say, I shall escape,
And looking down from the high sky,
Shall see below in finite shape
Divorced by death, this other I:
And know on that transcendant day
That I was spirit, he was clay.

Yet—what if mine the part to lie
Cast off, out worn, and viewed with loathing,
To rot where he has flung me by,
Glad to be rid of his smirched clothing?
If he were greater, none the less,
And I below *his* consciousness?

Kenneth H. Ashley.

PULVIS ET UMBRA

Along the crowded streets I walk and think
How I, a shadow, pace among the shades,
For I and all men seem to be unreal:
Foam that the seas of God which cover all
Cast on the air a moment, shadows thrown
In moving westward by the Moon of Death.

Oh, shall it set at last, that orb of Death?
May any morning follow? As I think,
From one surmise upon another thrown,
My very thoughts appear to me as shades—
Shades, like the prisoning self that bounds them all,
Shades, like the transient world, and as unreal.

But other hours there be when I, unreal,
When only I, vague in a conscious Death,
Move through the mass of men unseen by all;
I move along their ways, I feel and think,
Yet am more light than echoes, or the shades
That hide me, from their stronger bodies thrown.

And better moments come when, overthrown
All round me, lie the ruins of the unreal
And momentary world, as thin as shades;

When I alone, triumphant over Death,
Eternal, vast, fill with the thoughts I think,
And with my single soul the frame of all.

Ah, for a moment could I grasp it all
Ah, could but I (poor wrestler often thrown)
Once grapple with the truth, oh then, I think,
Assured of which is living, which unreal,
I would not murmur though among the shades
My lot were cast, among the shades and Death.

"One thing is true," I said, "and that is Death,"
And yet it may be God disproves it all;
And Death may be a passage from the shades,
And films on our beclouded senses thrown;
And Death may be a step beyond the Unreal
Towards the Thought that answers all I think.

In vain I think. O moon-like thought of Death,
All is unreal beneath thee, uncertain all,
Dim moon-ray thrown along a world of shades!

A. Mary F. Robinson.

THE SOUL OF MAN

In the soul of man there are many voices,
That silence wakens and sound restrains:
A song of love, that the soul rejoices,
With windy music, and murmuring rains;

A song of light, when the dawn arises,
And earth lies shining, and wet with dew;
And life goes by, in a myriad guises,
Under a heaven of stainless blue.

The willows, bending over the river,
Where the water ripples between the reeds,
Where the shadows sway, and the pale lights quiver
On floating lily, and flowing weeds,

Have whispering voices, soft as showers
Of April falling on upland lawns,
On the nodding harebell, and pale wind-flowers,
Through silver evens, and golden dawns.

But softer than love, and deeper than longing
Are the sweet, frail voices of drifting ghosts;
In the soul of man they are floating, thronging
As wind-blown petals, pale, flickering hosts.

Frederic Manning.

TO KEATS

On a magical morning, with twinkling feet,
And a song at his lips that was strange and sweet,
Somebody new came down the street
To the world's derision and laughter.

Now he is dumb with no more to say,
Now he is dead and taken away,
Silent and still and leading the way,
And the world come tumbling after.

Lord Dunsany.

THE COMING POET

"Is it far to the town?" said the poet,
As he stood 'neath the groaning vane,
And the warm lights shimmered silver
On the skirts of the windy rain.
"These are those who call me," he pleaded,
"And I'm wet and travel sore."
But nobody spoke from the shelter,
And he turned from the bolted door.

And they wait in the town for the poet
With stones at the gates, and jeers,
But away on the wolds of distance
In the blue of a thousand years
He sleeps with the age that knows him,
In the clay of the unborn, dead,
Rest at his weary insteps,
Fame at his crumbled head.

Francis Ledwidge.

TO ALL MINOR POETS

My brothers, who have plucked the flowers of rhyme
And strewn them on the highways thick and fast,
The blossoms of a moment that we cast
Shall lie forgotten for a long, long time:
Till all we said, and all we thought about
Grows quaint and strange, and all our life has past
For ever from the earth. And when at last
Some lover of old songs shall draw us out
From the great rubbish-heap of time, to please
His fancy with an age unlike his own,
And set us tenderly upon his shelves,
We shall be so transformed and overgrown
By subtle workings of the centuries,
I think that we shall hardly know ourselves.

Roger Heath.

THE FOOL

The madman wandering head in air
  About the mustard fields
Sees hosts of flying angels there
  With golden spears and shields;
The fool, the fool men pity and despise,
The brain-sick fool, with wonder stricken eyes.

He cannot hold his mind to earth,
  He lives in heaven all day;
Bright sunlit spirits in their mirth
  Flit round about his way.
The fool, the fool stands happy for an hour
To see an angel in a common flower.

He cannot see the wild-rose tree,
  He cannot see the stone;
Strange presences around him be,
  He never goes alone.
The fool, the fool who walks the lanes at night,
Feels a warm love enwrap him round like light.

He wanders where the poppies grow
  Red-flaming in the sun;
The racing winds against him blow,
  A living voice each one.—
The fool, the fool has wit enough to find
God's whisper in the passing of the wind.

E. G. Morice.

THE OLD

Surely they know, the old;
  The years have made them wise.
What secrets do they hold
  Within their tired eyes?

With many a differing tongue
  Long trained in wordy strife
Hear while they tell the young
  The mystery of life.

Some trod the road marked "Straight,"
  Scorning the pleasant plains.
Their love has changed to hate,
  Seeing their little gains.

Yet, envious, they would keep
  Their followers therein,
Mumbling in senile sleep
  "Death is the wage of sin."

Some chose the fairer way
  Where love and beauty rove.
Now, sick at heart, they say:
  "We know not Lust from Love,

"And Beauty mates with shame
  And early dreams have died.
What secret should we name?
  We know the world is wide."

And some have followed Truth:
  Shaking with cynic mirth
They croak: "Not here, O youth,
  Nor anywhere on earth."

Who toiled for fame or gold
  Speak tonelessly or slow:
"We? But we are not old;
  Our souls died long ago."

All yearn for life beyond
  The unknown gate of Death.
Yet, God, what men more fond
  Than old men of their breath?

O youth, they do not know!
  You tread a lonely road.
No other soul can show
  Where lies your soul's abode.

H. Ross.

REMORSE

Throughout her round of common days
She conquered selfish, vain desire,
And, fed from out her spirit's fire,
The lamp of service lit her ways.

And we who were her only care
In grief or laughter, ill or good,
We gave her little gratitude,
Of praise we left her unaware.

But when we knew that she was dead,
Then rose the unacknowledged years
Of toil before us, and our tears
Were bitter for the words unsaid.

The sun she loved, and singing birds
And blossoms on the summer trees,
She gained more gladness out of these
Than ever came from human words.

To-day the sun is on her grave,
But she is gone beyond the sun.
And does she know how late begun
We speak of her as good and brave?

With God we plead for this alone,
That she may know our long regret,
That she may hear the praises yet
Of hearts that hunger to atone.

Nancy Pollok.

LOVE'S MADNESS

Well, so it is: the thing I had
Was fit to make the world run mad:
It was a splendor so intense
It smote my sins to innocence,
And through men's mist of fears and lies
Clove one clear pathway to the skies.

Such was the race I might have run;
Such was the palm I might have won;
Such was the light, the flame, the flower:
And in a day and in an hour
I took it as not fit to take
And spent it for a woman's sake.

I cannot think she did not pay
The worth of any hour or day:
She could not know, she could not guess,
The world's loss or my loneliness,
But paid for all (O just and wise)
With the least laughter of her eyes.

And if an angel came in tears
And proffered me my wasted years,
And spread before my feet anew
The race to run, the deed to do,
With all things sweet and all things strange
—I would not change, I would not change!

Gerald Gould.

EMBARKMENT

Useless, and cast like seaweed on the shore,
Where children yet may find it in their play,
Lies my discarded Book of yesterday
(Of yesterday, and all that came before);
And only yesterday, I prized it more
Than nun her missal when she goes to pray,
And through its pages let my fancy stray
Among enchanted realms of mystic lore.

And often, with eyes kindling from the tale,
I seemed to view strange pageantries unfurl,
Bright phantom banners in a phantom breeze . . .
But that is past; and now, tumultuous seas
Shout to the far horizon, and I hurl
My ship upon the waters, and set sail.

Maisie Bell Whyte.

YOUTH'S IMMORTALITIES

The Abbey's three tall towers
  Behold the tides of men
Flow from their silent waters
  To seas beyond their ken;
They gazed on us, my brothers,
  And we were happy then.

Our footsteps, oh my brothers,
  In pleasant paths were set,
With pleasures to remember,
  And sorrows to forget,
Deep draughts of love and laughter,
  A cup without regret.

In days of joyous labor
  And golden leisure hours,
We spent the spring of living,
  Chequered with sun and showers,
And grew to manhood's measure
  Beneath the three grey towers.

Our battle still was distant
  And faint the drum and fife,
Yet we knew the flush of conquest
  And the virile joys of strife,
And fingers dimly groping
  Came near the key of life.

And bells on summer evenings,
  Like a peal of silver tears
For beauty sadly wandering
  Among the misty years,
Woke the stirring soul within us
  To speak of hopes and fears.

Hopes for life's great adventure,
  And for a world set free;
Fear in a dim foreknowledge
  Of wanderings to be,
Hearing on sunny uplands
  The sound of storm at sea.

And often, in hushed voices
  We talked the night away,
With speech of all the wonders
  That lie too deep for day,
Till morning faintly flushing
  Rose from her couch of grey.

Time is the strong destroyer
  Of most that Heaven sends,
And cherished treasures daily
  Draw to their destined ends,
But youth shall live for ever
  In the trusty grip of friends.

William Noel Hodgson.

THE MEETING

As I went through the ancient town,
  Long lost and found once more,
Oh, who is this in a green gown
  I knew so well of yore?

Veils of enchantment hid the place,
  Hung every street and square:
I felt the sea-wind in my face
  And ruffling in my hair.

Oh town I loved so well and lost,
  And find again with tears,
Your streets hold many a darling ghost
  And all the vanished years!

My heart went singing a low song,
  Glad to be home again.
But who is this comes blithe and young,
  Not feared of life but fain?

Oh, who is this comes cold as stone
  To my quick cry and call?
Of all the faces loved and flown
  I knew her best of all.

"Stay, you are . . ." Is she deaf and blind
  Or hath she quite forgot?
What chill is in the sun, the wind,
  Because she knows me not?

As I went down—my eyes were wet—
  Eager and stepping fast
That was my own sweet youth I met
  Who knew me not and passed.

Katherine Tynan.

IN THE GLOAMING

I ABOVE

"In the gloaming—O! my Darling, when the lights
are dim and low,
And the quiet shadows falling, softly come and
softly go,
And the winds are sobbing faintly with a gentle
unknown woe,
Will you think of me, and love me, as you once did,
long ago?
In the gloaming—O! my Darling,
When the merry song is stilled,
And your voices sink to whispers
And the thought your heart has thrilled
All day long 'neath jest and laughter
Rises, and your eyes are filled
With bitter tears for my last face,
Think only of a trust fulfilled.
In the gloaming—O! my Darling, think not bitterly
of me;
Though I passed away in silence, left you lonely,
set you free:
For my heart was crushed with longing, what had
been could never be,
It was best to leave you quickly, best for you and
best for me."

"In the gloaming—O! my Darling, when the quiet
shadows fall,
And my lone heart in its sadness seemeth achingly
to call
To the sobbing winds that echo only deepening
pain and thrall,
I will answer through life's darkness, trusting love
to fathom all.
In the gloaming, O! my Darling,
Your brave trust shall be fulfilled
Though I shrink beneath my smiling
And my longing eyes are filled
With those saddest tears that fall not,
I shall rouse me as you willed,
I shall bear me in life's working
Nobly till my grief is stilled.
In the gloaming—O! my Darling, I shall think—
not bitterly—
Of your passing from me silent, judging with true
fealty
Love the highest and the purest in the silence to be
strong,
Till beyond the gates we clasp each other freed
from earthly wrong."

Meta Orred.

SONG

(From "Hassan")

How splendid in the morning glows the lily; with what grace he throws
His supplication to the rose: do roses nod the head, Yasmin?
But when the silver dove descends, I find the little flower of friends,
Whose very name that sweetly ends, I say when I have said, Yasmin.
The morning light is clear and cold; I dare not in that light behold
A whiter light, a deeper gold, a glory too far shed, Yasmin.
But when the deep red eye of day is level with the lone highway,
And some to Mecca turn to pray, and I toward thy bed, Yasmin.
Or when the wind beneath the moon is drifting like a soul aswoon,
And harping planets talk love's tune with milky wings outspread, Yasmin,
Shower down thy love, O burning bright! for one night or the other night
Will come the Gardener in white, and gathered flowers are dead, Yasmin!

James Elroy Flecker.

SONG

My love is like a dark tree
  Whose roots grow strong and deep;
And all day long, protectingly,
His wide arms fling the winds from me
Or sift the sun-gold gallantly
  For me to catch and keep.

My love is like a King's tree
  Royally flourishing;
And even his fallen leaves shall be
Rich patterns on the path of me,
When light fades from the utmost sea
  And birds forget to sing.

Maisie Bell Whyte.

SONG

Thoughts timorous as the swift deer's shadow pass
Before your eyes,
Light as the breath that whispers in the grass
And whispering dies.

Your mind is a blue dancing butterfly
Beyond my reach;
A wild thing wheeling with the seagulls by
A windy beach.

It is a long weed waving, dimly seen
Beneath a stream;
A cuckoo calling in a wood between
Waking and dream.

L. A. G. Strong.

TRIOLET

To lay upon thy quiet grave
I bring no flowers belovéd heart:
My fairest blooms I did not save
To lay upon thy quiet grave.
Love's blossoms unto thee I gave
Freely before thou didst depart.
To lay upon thy quiet grave.
I bring no flowers belovéd heart.

Bertha Annakin.

REFUGE

As in the tales of wonder, known of old,
Some mariner would find his heart's desire—
An island of pure peace, a town of gold
Set on the splendid hilltop, spire on spire;
And there, far from the long waves' lonely swell,
His anchored ship in harbor cool and deep,
This tired adventurer a space would dwell
Where waking held more dreams than mortal sleep;
So I have hours of wonder, when I gain
Your Presence; and your soul, remote and still,
Waits, an enchanted refuge from all pain,
But further than that city on the hill!
And I, storm tossed and weary, rest awhile,
As in the peace of that far, fairy isle.

Vera I. Arlett.

HAVEN

I have come home at last; the port is still
And evening winds foretell a deep, hushed night.
O, if you only knew how strong the will
That captained me, how faint and far the light!
Here, now at peace, I think of bitter seas,
With skies a hopeless black; mad winds that fled
Shrieking the storm's tormented ecstasies,
And darkened every light that lay ahead.
Yet lonely on my soul's long, level wave
The mornings rose, the yellow sunsets died;
And many were the un-named thoughts I gave
Into the soundless depth below that tide.
But now, the moorings of your peace hold fast,—
Most patient watcher, I am home at last.

Vera I. Arlett.

"BETWEEN"

I have not reached the other side of Care,
Nor felt the comfort of the sun-warmed air
And the soft breaths of those that flourish there.

I cannot tread the span that lies between;
My eyes are unaccustomed to the sheen,
My faltering feet to rainbow-bridged ravine.

Only I strain to see beyond this place
Your lips, your eyes, the Soul within your face,
That draws my Spirit into Infinite Space.

Joan Warburg.

ACHIEVEMENT

If we had sought adventurously the stars,
  Or snared some wandering angel with a song,
Or healed men's hearts of fear, the world of wars,
  Death of its sting, and love of half its wrong;

If we had lifted an imperious name
  Beyond the narrow bounds of mortal mood,
Fanning with the quick impulse of our fame
  The crawling moments of the multitude:—

Then were there cause for pride—*then* might we
    dare
  To claim some bright, extravagant reward
    Beyond the reach of Time.—Alas! our boast

Is only that one day was wholly fair,
  When beechen leaves cast patterns on green sward,
    —One day in Spring. All other days are lost.

Margaret Sackville.

THE BALLAD OF CAMDEN TOWN

I walked with Maisie long years back
  The streets of Camden town,
I splendid in my suit of black,
  And she divine in brown.

Hers was a proud and noble face,
  A secret heart, and eyes
Like water in a lonely place
  Beneath unclouded skies.

A bed, a chest, a faded mat,
  And broken chairs a few,
Were all we had to grace our flat
  In Hazel Avenue.

But I could walk to Hampstead Heath,
  And crown her head with daisies,
And watch the streaming world beneath,
  And men with other Maisies.

When I was ill and she was pale
  And empty stood our store,
She left the latchkey on its nail,
  And saw me nevermore.

Perhaps she cast herself away
  Lest both of us should drown:
Perhaps she feared to die, as they
  Who die in Camden Town.

What came of her? The bitter nights
  Destroy the rose and lily,
And souls are lost among the lights
  Of painted Piccadilly.

What came of her? The river flows
  So deep and wide and stilly,
And waits to catch the fallen rose
  And clasp the broken lily.

I dream she dwells in London still
  And breathes the evening air,
And often walk to Primrose Hill
  And hope to meet her there.

Once more together we will live,
  For I will find her yet:
I have so little to forgive;
  So much, I can't forget.

James Elroy Flecker.

CROSS ROADS

Where two roads meet she waits, her straining eyes
Bent on the far horizon. On one hand
The way winds through a pleasant, smiling land
And Wisdom beckons there. The other lies
Mid realms of troubled splendor: summits rise
In storm-swept purity: Love takes his stand
Upon a chasm's brink. His eyes command
But he keeps silence. Still she waits and sighs.
Since God made man we women thus have stood,
With bursting heart, and weary, weary brain
To make that choice which falls to womanhood.
The way of ease or rugged path of pain?
Ah see, her choice is made Her lips respond
To Love's embrace. She will not look beyond.

E. M. Kelly.

IF BEAUTY CAME TO YOU

If Beauty came to you,
  Ah, would you know her grace,
And could you in your shadowed prison view
  Unscathed her face?

Stepping as noiselessly
  As moving moth-wings, so
Might she come suddenly to you or me
  And we not know.

Amid these clangs and cries,
  Alas, how should we hear
The shy, dim-woven music of her sighs
  As she draws near,

Threading through monstrous, black
  Uncharitable hours,
Where the soul shapes its own abhorred rack
  Of wasted powers?

William Kean Seymour.

THE BLACKBIRD

Evening over fields of cloud
  In sombre beauty came,
Washing the slumbering trees with mist
  And the tall spires with flame.

Then from one of the still trees
  Like drops that run along
The glossy faces of green leaves,
  Fell a blackbird's song:

And Memory opened dreaming eyes
  And the pale ghosts stirred,
And heaven and earth went down before
  The soft note of a bird.

For as the hidden blackbird spoke
  Out of the leafy tree,
One long and shining wave-crest broke
  Along a secret sea.

Martin Armstrong.

LINES ON A BULLFINCH, FREED

Who once was held in durance vile
Now flits among the leafy trees;
Nor wit, nor will, nor food, nor guile
May lure him back to captive ease.

Where finches throng in buoyant flight
He dips and rises with the rest,
And the warm amber of the light
Flushes the ruby of his breast.

Among the cool of willow sedge,
Where grasses droop a tawny seed,
We mark him by the river's edge
His light weight balanced on a reed.

And it may be the while we watch
In silence from a drifting boat,
Hid in the leaves our ear shall catch
The small perfection of his note.

Then let him thieve the garden still,
A blessèd bird beyond our reach,
With all the ebon of his bill
Bright with the nectar of the peach.

And through a wealth of ransomed days
Let him uplift his wings to fly,
And let his be the woodland ways
And the wide places of the sky.

Pamela Tennant.

HUNTING SONG

The hunt is up, the hunt is up,
It sounds from hill to hill,
It pierces to the secret place
Where we are lying still,
And one of us the quarry is,
And one of us must go
When through the arches of the wood
We hear the dread horn blow.

A huntsman bold is Master Death,
And reckless does he ride,
And terror's hounds with bleeding fangs
Go baying at his side.
And will it be a milk white doe
Or little dappled fawn,
Or will it be an antlered stag
Must face the icy dawn?

Or will it be a golden fox
Must leap from out his lair,
Or where the trailing shadows pass
A merry romping hare?
The hunt is up, the horn is loud
By plain and covert side,

And one must run alone, alone,
When Death abroad does ride.

But idle 'tis to crouch in fear
Since Death will find you out.
Then up and hold your head erect
And pace the wood about,
And swim the stream, and leap the wall,
And race the starry mead,
Nor feel the bright teeth in your flank
Till they be there indeed.

For in the secret hearts of men
Are peace and joy at one,
There is a pleasant land where stalks
No darkness in the sun,
And through the arches of the wood
Do break like silver foam
Young laughter and the noise of flutes
And voices singing home.

Sylvia Lynd.

SEA CAVES

I came at the ebb of the calling tide
  Where wandered surges roam,
And a Dead Thing paced with me side by side
  And laughed at the whispering foam;
He flung the ghost of a broken toy
  At the heels of the moaning sea,
And his laugh was the laugh of a buried joy
  That broke the heart of me.

I fled the length of the gleaming sands
  And the Dead Thing went before,
Till I stayed at the edge of the Sorrowful Lands
  Where the black rocks leave the shore;
And all around was the soft sweet flood
  And the lap of the crooning swell,
On the farmost rock the Dead Thing stood
  And chanted the Dead Thing's spell;

Till away beyond a mermaid sang,
  On the crest of the waiting sea,
And shoreward, shoreward her music rang
  Like a dream of harmony.
For its lilt was ever of green sea-caves
  Where fossilled memories lie,

And peace is over the sand-strewn graves,
  And Dead Things really die.

I crept and gazed at the sea-caves green
  As I knelt at the Dead Thing's side
With a thousand fathoms of peace between
  And the lure of the calling tide.
And there as the sea-maid ceased to sing
  On the crest of the waiting sea
I saw her stand where the sea-weeds swing
  Round the graves of memory.

Madeline Nightingale.

THE GREAT SHIPS

I wonder if the great ships
Are coming o'er the bar
With the West Wind in their rigging,
From unseen lands afar,
And if they slowly sail on
The rayless waters flowing
By the gates of a city I love well,
And where I would be going.

For I am as the great ships
And on the tide of life
Go forth to unknown places
And ne'er find rest but strife,
And in a human ocean
'Mid isles of brick and stone,
Past ports and lands I know not,
I sail through seas unknown.

I wonder if the great ships
Are crowding into port,
With mournful sirens wailing
As though from sea they brought
The terror of their conflict
Which holds them as they creep
From highways of the ocean
And wonders of the deep.

For I am as the great ships,
And sailing in a sea
Where chartless souls are moving
On human tides—to me
Comes thought of lands of twilight
And ports of rest where lie
The weary ships unchartered
Beneath an evening sky.

I wonder if the great ships
Creep up at break of dawn,
The seagulls round their rigging,
Grey-winged, with cries forlorn;
Those ships and birds sail ever
Through dreams of mine that are
Of lone lands in the twilight
And the sunset o'er the bar

Cecil Roberts.

A SUMMER NIGHT

The crescent moon sinks slowly down
And, seeming to my fancy's eye
A silver gallery in the sky,
Hangs low above the sleeping town;

Hangs low above the little bay,
Touching the dancing waves with light,
Where once on such a summer night
Perchance some Viking warship lay.

Far out with measured stroke and slow,
A boat is drawing to the shore;
I hear the creaking of the oar
And distant voices deep and low.

Then closing eyes I seem to hear
The old sea-rover's boats that slip
From out the shadow of the ship
In some old, long-forgotten year,

When towering o'er the moonlit deep
Came the long dragons of the North,
And the fierce sons of Thor stole forth
To fall upon the town in sleep.

Here where the quiet moonbeams stray
Across the beach and up the street,

Was heard the tread of sudden feet
With clash of steel and war horns' bray.

The startled watchman, catching breath
Even with the white blade at his throat,
Blew loud and clear one warning note,—
And found his swift reward in death.

Then shriek and shout and clash of brand,
Wild cries of triumph and despair,
Borne on the fragrant summer air
Echoed about the shuddering land;

Echoed, and sank and died away,
And silence held the night again,
Save for the oarsmen's wild refrain
As the long ship swept down the bay.

Across the starlit silence drew
A formless shadow, and below
Pale tongues of light shot to and fro
Now gleaming red, now ghastly blue,

Till flushed the sky with lurid red
As leaped to heaven the sudden fire,
Wrapping in one vast funeral pyre
The blood-stained streets and quiet dead.

And still the waves went murmuring
The pebbled beaches far along
That wonderful and world-old song
Which here to-night I hear them sing.

. . . . . .

The moon is gone, a rosy gleam
Is brightening in the Eastern sky,
The blood and flame of days gone by
Have vanished with my waking dream.

Duncan J. Robertson.

A BALLAD OF DREAMLAND

To-Night in Dreamland who can rest?
We hear on the night wind falling,
Over the hills in the dim, dark West,
The horn of a huntsman calling.
"Follow!" the horn of the huntsman cries;
On the wind over plain and hollow
A voice from the tarn where Echo lies
Dreamily answers, "Follow!"

We hear the far-off horn, we come,
Into the forest sweepeth
The wild white chase of waters dumb
Where the fern and the hemlock sleepeth.
Who knows the form of the thing that flies?
Hath it feet? Hath it wings like a swallow?
Who cares? The horn of the hunter cries
To the shadowy huntsmen, "Follow!"

The third cock crows, the dawn wind blows,
The beams of morning quiver;
Down vale and glade the huntsmen fade
Like mists upon the river.
Whilst o'er the streams and hills of dreams
Die horn and hunting halloa,
Far, far away where night nor day
Nor hound nor horse, may follow.

Henry De Vere Stacpoole.

THE BIRD ON YGDRASIL

In the blowing tops of Ygdrasil,
  Over the Astral sea,
My spirit like a splendid bird
  Sings in infinity.
Sometimes I hear the psalm he sings:
  With baby words I try
To sing in time that boundless rhyme
  Beneath this little sky.

On the dazzling trees of Ygdrasil,
  In God's vast summer day—
Where sits the seven-horned triple sun
  That lights the Milky Way,
My spirit on the blossomed bough
  In sapphire climes unknown,
'Mid streaming glory, gazes down
  On this dull flesh and bone.

Sometimes I feel his favouring smile
  On that high perch afar,
And smiling up the bowery sky
  I hail him from my star,
And ponder in this puny world
  With pigmy thoughts of mine
How this poor gipsy-sprite dare claim
  A relative so fine.

On the dizzy heights of Ygdrasil
  In my lord's boundless gaze
The earth looks like a diamond bright
  With its twinkling years and days:
Oh! dearest of the petalled stars
  That dance on all the tree
To him this sparkling bud of heaven
  That folds the heart of me.

On the deathless tree of Ygdrasil
  When the hymning tempest rings
My spirit rides the ranging boughs,
  And spreads his rainbow wings;
And down the lustrous whirlwind's breath,
  Where flaring comets stream,
He wafts that mystic merriment
  That wakes me when I dream.

Far on that golden-fruited Tree,
  In the everlasting rays
The spirit sits that whets my wits
  And glorifies my days:
Oh, scarce know I—mixed mud and sky,
  If bird or seraph he
Who lights me with that glittering eye
  In blue eternity.

James A. Mackereth.

THE CITY OF SLEEP

Manikin, maker of dreams,
Came to the city of sleep:
The watch was on guard, and the gates were barred
And the moat was deep.

'Who is on my side, who?'
Moonbeams rose in a row:
He tuned them loud betwixt town and cloud
But his voice was low.

He sang a song of the moon
For loan of her silver beams;
Misty and fair, and afloat in air,
Lay the ladder of dreams.

He harped by river and hill;
And the river forgot to flow,
And the wind in the grass forgot to pass,
And the grass to grow.

He harped to the heart of earth
Where honey in hive lies sweet:
And that sound leapt through the gates, and crept
Through the silent street.

Manikin, maker of dreams,
He pursed his lips to pipe:
And the strange and the new grew near and true,
For the time was ripe.

He piped to the hearts of men:
And dreamers rose up straight,
To drift unbarred by the drowsy guard,
And beyond the gate.

He piped the dream of the maid:
And her heart was up and away;
And fast it beat and hurried her feet
To the gates of day.

He piped the dream of the mother,
The cry of her babe for food:
And she rose from rest and gave it the breast
And that was good!

He piped the dream of the child:
And into its hands and feet
Came tunes to play of the live-long day;
And that was sweet!

He piped to the heart of youth:
And the heart of youth had sight
Of love to be won, and a race to be run;
And that was right!

He piped the song of age:
And that was a far-off song,—

When life made haste and the mouth could taste:—
But that was wrong!

Manikin, maker of dreams,
Had piped himself to sleep:
The watch was on guard, and the gates were barred,
And the moat was deep!

Laurence Housman.

The sword fell down: I heard a knell;
I thought that ease was best,
And sullen men that buy and sell
Were host: and I was guest.
All unashamed I sat with swine,
We shook the dice for war,
The night was drunk with an evil wine—
But she went on before.

She rode a steed of the sea-foam breed,
All faery was her blade,
And the armour on her tender limbs
Was of the moonshine made.

By God that sends the master-maids,
I know not whence she came,
But the sword she bore to save the soul
Went up like an altar flame
Where a broken race in a desert place
Call on the Holy Name.

We strained our eyes in the dim day-rise,
We could not see them plain;
But two dead men from Valmy fen
Rode at her bridle-rein.

I hear them all, my fathers call,
I see them how they ride,
And where had been that rout obscene
Was an army straight with pride.
A hundred thousand marching men,
Of squadrons twenty score,
And after them all the guns, the guns,
But she went on before.

Her face was like a king's command
When all the swords are drawn.
She stretched her arms and smiled at us,
Her head was higher than the hills.
She led us on to endless plains.
We lost her in the dawn.

Hilaire Belloc.

BALLAD OF THE SOUTH COUNTRY

To men who dwell in southern shires
And breathe the air of down,
I'll tell a tale that few have heard
In village or in town.

And he who listens while I tell,
Here must he stand with me,
Where every wind that stirs the turf
Must first have crossed the sea.

Long years ago, before the downs
Became the curse of men,
There came a rider on his horse,
And both were bold as ten.

They galloped right the length of down,
And laughed, both man and beast:
Then sudden to the east-shore came,
Yet recked not in the least,

But round they wheeled to right-about,
With neither look nor jest,
And hence, and o'er our springy turf,
Rode back towards the west.

And when they came to Ladyholt
They laughed and turned again,

And wheeled about to right about,
  Not caring why or when.

And still they ride, to east, to west,
  The bare-backed slopes of down,
Though few have seen a man in green,
  Or horse of earthen brown.

But stand beside that golden patch
  Where flames the laughing gorse,
And tell me if you do not hear
  The gallop of a horse.

Some days you'll hear it coming aft,
  And sometimes on before,
From east to west, from west to east,
  Along the southern shore.

And who among our southern men
  Would glory in the down,
Must get astride and out and ride
  A steed of earthen brown.

E. A. Fielder.

ORIELDA

Sweet Orielda from the stars
  Stole down to earth again,
And burst the bright celestial bars,
  To ease a lover's pain.

She sought him by the woodland ways
  They once for trysting knew,
Where now, with sorrow all a-daze,
  He walked the dark night through.

The lovelight in her eyes did shine,
  She softly breathed his name,
And on his face a look divine
  Of joy seraphic came.

The Heaven from which her soul had sped
  Was very pure and high,
On earth they never could have wed—
  No more she wondered why.

What Orielda said that night
  I guess, but may not tell;
Brief words she spoke with presage bright
  Of all that soon befell.

At dawn they found her lover dead,
  In restful, radiant guise,
As one that on a happy bed
  Good dreams a-dreaming lies.

"Set free from strife and earthly jars!"
  They said, but none had spied
How Orielda from the stars
  Had kissed him as he died.

Oscar Boulton.

A DEAD POET

(James Elroy Flecker)

Weave for his brow the laurel wreath, he lies
For ever dumb, the lips that sang so well
Are locked in silence 'neath the alien skies,
And all the tales are told that he shall tell.

Ah, mourn a little, for his life was sweet,
And silence is too solemn after song,
He has gone hence ere men had time to greet
One who but seldom sang nor tarried long.

So sweet and light his singing, scarcely heard,
Only the silence touched our ears with sense
Of something void, as when a fluting bird
No more breaks on the valley's somnolence.

He has gone hence,—ah, whither! who shall say?
Perchance he treads the trackless paths of Night,
Long wearied in the Caravan of Day,
Perchance he seeks the Gardens of Delight,

And thro' dim-shaded valleys journeys on,
A moon-led pilgrim seeking for the Thing
Which dreamers spake of in the days long gone,
And poets sang of in a Grecian Spring.

It may be he has found those mounts of snow
All flushed with rose, those glades of endless sleep,
And knows the truths which many sought to know,
And wonders now why men grow sick and weep,

Why some are sad, as he was sad in days
When Beauty was too beautiful and frail,
When a dear voice was sweet beyond all praise,
Rising at night-time from a starlit vale.

O nevermore for him the sunset fades,
Nor ocean lifts her waters to the moon,
No more his feet shall wander in the glades,
His soul with mystic rapture deep aswoon;

For him no caravans with sound of bells
Move from the Syrian cities shadow-dim,
Nor long-lashed maidens dream by palm-girt wells,
Their phantom-world is all unknown to him.

He holds a wider converse with the stars,
And roams unfettered through the jewelled night,
His song flows in the wind 'mid nenuphars
Swaying and rustling in the dawning light.

Weave for his brow the laurel, for his name
What brighter memory than those sweet songs
Sung in a too-brief life that knew not fame,
Yet gave this wealth which now to Time belongs!

Cecil Roberts.

INDEX OF AUTHORS

A. E., 6-44
Annakin, Bertha, 182
Arlett, Vera I., 183-184
Armstrong, Martin, 16-191
Ashley, Kenneth H., 131-160

Belloc, Hilaire, 208
Benson, A. C., 39-51-115
Binyon, Laurence, 103
Blunden, Edmund, 73-120
Boulton, Oscar, 212
Bridges, Robert, 34
Burness, Robert, 122

Chesterton, Gilbert Keith, 124-151
Coppinger, Miriam A., 71
Cotgrave, Periwinkle, 43

Dangerfield, Margaret S., 42
David, Elfyn Williams, 53
Davies, W. H., 126
Davison, Edward, 19-55
da la Mare, Walter, 58
Drinkwater, John, 12
Dunsany, Lord, 164

Edwards, Ethel Ashton, 29-31

Fielder, E. A., 210
Flecker, James Elroy, 139-179-187

Goode, S. Marguerite, 127
Gould, Gerald, 66-125-147-171

Hardy, Thomas, 36-112
Harrison, E. Joyce, 38
Heath, Roger, 14-166
Hodgson, Ralph, 159
Hodgson, William Noel, 5-91-173
Holland, Helen E., 27
Holmes, Marjorie, 108
Housman, Laurence, 67-205

Jacob, Violet, 70-93
James, Winifred N., 113

Kaye-Smith, Sheila, 21-110
Kelly, E. M., 189
Kessler, N. J., 96

Larminie, Vera, 57-79
Ledwidge, Francis, 26-97-165
Lee, W. A., 15-128
Le Maistre, Violet, 62
Lewin, Everest, 1
Lynd, Sylvia, 49-84-193
Lyttleton, Lucy, 129-134-137

Mackereth, James A., 203
Manning, Frederic, 60-163
Masefield, John, 105
Matthewman, S., 20
Morice, E. G., 167
Muir, Edwin, 87-117

Nightingale, Madeline, 195

Orred, Meta, 177

Paley, Molly A., 61

Palmer, Herbert E., 80
Plunkett, Joseph Mary, 99
Pollak, Nancy, 170

Raworth, Esther, 78
Renshaw, E. A., 114
Rieu, E. V., 32-54-77
Roberts, Cecil, 197-214
Roberts, J. Slingsby, 130
Robertson, Duncan J., 9-89-199
Robinson, A. Mary F., 2-46-101-161
Ross, H., 86-168

Sackville, Margaret, 186
Sackville-West, V., 82-104-143
Seymour, William Kean, 18-190
Shanks, Edward, 28-41-144
Sitwell, Osbert, 52-150
Squire, J. C., 141
Sorley, Charles Hamilton, 146
Stacpoole, Henry De Vere, 202
Strong, L. A. G., 181
Stuart, Muriel, 119
Symons, Arthur, 107

Taylor, Cyril G., 4
Tennant, Pamela, 192
Thorley, Wilfred, 76
Tracey, C. B., 98
Tree, Iris, 23
Tynan, Katherine, 95-175

Warburg, Joan, 185
Walker, Edith M., 69
Whyte, Maisie Bell, 172-180
Williams, Charles, 63

Young, Molly, 81

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